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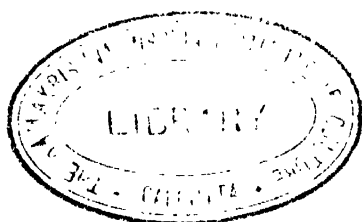






# A VENTURE OF FAITH

*Being a description of the  
World Congress of Faiths  
held in London*



BY THE SAME AUTHOR



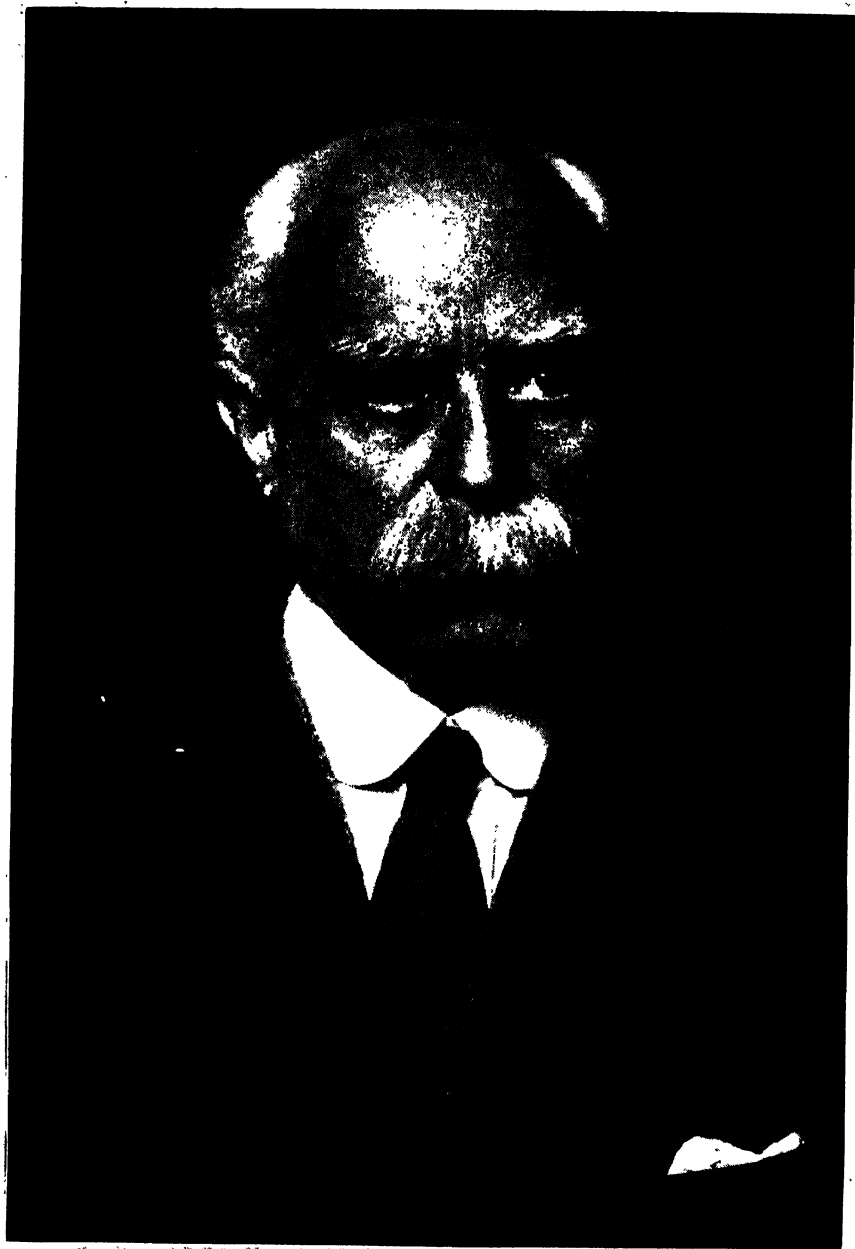
THE LIVING UNIVERSE

MODERN MYSTICS

THE REIGN OF GOD

EVEREST—THE CHALLENGE





*Russell, London*

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

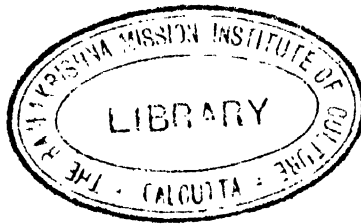
SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

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A VENTURE OF FAITH

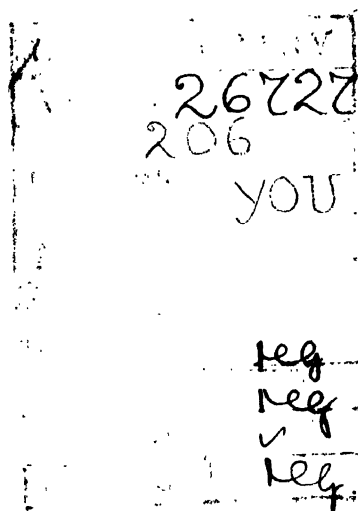
*Being a description of the  
World Congress of Faiths  
held in London*

1924



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## PREFACE



THE OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD CONGRESS OF Faiths, giving a verbatim report of the main addresses and an abbreviated report of the discussions on them, has already been published. The present book describes my personal connection with the Congress, my personal impressions, and the conclusions I reached about it. The views expressed are my own and it is not likely that anyone will share them in their entirety, but I hope all will share with me the intense desire to arouse a true spirit of fellowship among men of every nationality and every religion.

Others are working to improve the material and social conditions of mankind and to establish peace through political action. We of the Congress aspire to furnishing the prime motive power of all such efforts. We would inspire men to better their own conditions. We would supply them with the root incentive. And we would incite them to aim at something higher than the passive condition of peace. They must not be content with the plains. Even ants build their ant hills. And in the world of the spirit the more enterprising must build their Himalaya and attract the lesser upward to the heights.

F. E. Y.

WESTERHAM, KENT,





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SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

*(Frontispiece)*

YUSAF ALI

*(Facing p. 48)*

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SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

*(Facing p. 176)*

SIR ABDUL QADIR

*(Facing p. 208)*

DR. SUZUKI

*(Facing p. 248)*



## CHAPTER ONE



### A PERSONAL NOTE

MAY I BE EXCUSED FOR MAKING A PERSONAL EXPLANATION at the start? May I explain how it came about that I who started life in the Army, who afterwards became known as an explorer, and who later became more widely known as the leader of a political mission to Lhasa, should have been the leader in organising a Congress of representatives of all the great religions of the world to discuss how the spirit of fellowship might best be promoted? For some obscure reason soldiers are supposed to be little interested in religion; explorers are supposed to think only of adventures; and leaders of political missions to be absorbed in politics. We English are not accustomed to the idea of religion being at the root of all a man's activities, informing his whole life. When therefore a military explorer presumes to lead a religious Congress, it is regarded as something so unusual that an explanation of his presumption is called for. That explanation I would now offer. I would describe how religion became the dominant interest in my life.

I inherited a religious disposition and was encouraged in religious practice in my youth. But as I went out into life I did not find much interest taken in religion by the generality of the people I met. And soon I found strong attacks being made upon all that I had been brought up to believe was absolutely true and finally fixed. The foundations of my life were being assaulted. Science was then—fifty years ago—very strident, very aggressive. It believed it was able and called upon to remove the basis

of religion. Shortly religion would be looked upon as an old superstition and in future all men would live by the pure light of reason and do what science advised.

The contest was all most exciting—and not dissimilar to what is going on to-day. And the young of those days, like the young of these days, thought that science was on the winning side and that religion must lose. I myself was caught in the controversy. I was deeply interested in science. My explorations had brought me in touch with one science after another. From travelling across the desert of Gobi in long night marches I had been deeply influenced by the stars, and so as to fix my latitude by them when exploring in the Himalaya I had had to study astronomy. I marvelled at the number, the distance, the age, and the size of the stars. But what specially intrigued me was the question whether the planets of any of them were inhabited—of course, not by beings resembling ourselves, but perhaps by beings unlike us in bodily form yet more intelligent. The busy little ants I would look at had no idea that there existed millions of beings like myself of whose presence they were quite unaware. And might there not exist on planets of other stars than our sun beings as superior to me as I was to the ants? That is a question which began to excite my curiosity more than forty years ago and has been exciting it ever since.

Then exploring new regions of the Himalaya made me interest myself in geology. How wonderful to think that these mighty peaks, so everlasting, so immovable as they seemed, once lay below the sea, and had slowly been upheaved to these stupendous heights! What millions of years this gradual upheaval must have occupied! What titanic forces must have been at work! Then what a story the fossils told of the slow development of life

from the simplest forms which left their imprint five hundred million years ago, up to the ape and then, a million years ago, to man !

Along with this interest in astronomy and geology aroused by journeys in the desert and the mountains came interest in life in general, aroused by the controversies of the time over the Darwinian theory of evolution. Darwin had just died, but Alfred Russell Wallace, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer were still alive and were contending furiously with the opponents of evolution. I loved the spaciousness of the new theory. It accorded well with the feelings excited by my travels, by the wide scope of the desert, and by the magnitude of the mountains. I loved, too, the sense of inter-relation of all living beings, including human beings, which reading Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and Wallace's *Darwinism* gave. Not only were all men related to one another in one vast family, but men were related to animals, and birds, and insects, and even to the flowers. We all came of one original stock. It was a staggering conception—then, when it was comparatively fresh—and in connection with the other idea of the planets of stars being inhabited, set me thinking on wide, far-reaching lines.

But what had religion to say to all this? Science carried away by its magnificent triumph was making a deadly attack on religion. Some men frankly declared themselves downright atheists. The universe was one vast machine. Men were but tiny cogs on a wheel. The machine ground relentlessly on and man had nothing to say in the matter. Others, like Huxley, did not go so far as that. They attacked the miracles in the Bible. They asked what was the use of prayer. But they did not go so far as to say that there was no God. They merely said that they did not know whether God existed



or not. They called themselves agnostics. Religion, however, did not take these attacks lying down. It was stirred to action by these assaults of science. It was driven back on its foundations. It had to abandon many of its former contentions. It could no longer hold that every word in the Bible was literally true. It had to abandon old conceptions of God. But it held fast to the spiritual as opposed to the material view of the universe. It maintained that the world was governed for good and that men were not mere cogs in a piece of machinery but were sons of God, and had in them a spark of the divine.

All this excited me greatly as a young man. I followed the controversy in the magazines and in books and swayed from one side to the other. What science said seemed so incontrovertible. But so did what religion said. My natural bias was, though, in favour of religion. Something in me uprose against the notion that I was only a cog on a wheel and the universe nothing but a gigantic machine. I felt that my old conception—never very firmly held—of God as a kind of glorified Father Christmas would have to go. But I could distinctly feel another and far greater conception of Him forming itself in my mind.

And fortunately for me I had in those days ample leisure for thinking out my position, and I was placed in conditions most appropriate for meditation on the ultimate nature of things. Besides being engaged in exploration, I was also stationed for long periods at places in Central Asia and on the Northern Frontier of India, often by myself or with only one companion. So I had time to read and inducement to think, and besides books of science, philosophy, and religion I would read much poetry—Tennyson, Shelley, Byron, and Matthew Arnold.

That period, the close of the nineteenth century, was a very stirring time in religious and philosophic thought and the results of what then went on in thought we are now seeing in action. The materialistic philosophy was steadily gaining ground. Marx had said that "religion is the opium of the people" and Lenin at that very time was absorbing this doctrine. He had been warned that this extreme form of materialistic philosophy was not likely to survive, for a more spiritual, idealist form of philosophy was coming into vogue. But he brushed this aside as not being so adapted to his revolutionary plans. And looking back now after all these years I can understand his point of view. For at that time I had some contact with Russian officials and could see how reactionary they were. In 1890 and 1891 I spent many months in Kashgar, the capital of Chinese Turkestan, and used to meet the hospitable Russian Consul General nearly every day. He talked much about Russia and England. He spoke of the strikes in England and of the determination of the labouring classes to have political power. All this, he thought, should be suppressed: in Russia they put it down with a firm hand. As we now know, it was that firm hand which Lenin was at that very time planning to fight. And he found Marx's materialism more congenial to his purpose than any more spiritual philosophy. Religion he found softening and weakening.

At the period of which I am speaking I had heard nothing of Lenin but much of Tolstoy. His *Kingdom of God is Within You* had just come out. It reached me in Chitral on the far Northern Frontier and determined the main trend of my life. So profoundly, indeed, was I affected by the stirring thought of the times that I decided to make religion my main interest in life. I declared my intention of leaving the Government service and devoting

myself whole-heartedly to the cause of religion. And at one time I had thought I was on the verge of discovering a new religion which I should have to proclaim to the world as soon as I had got its main outlines more clearly defined in my mind.

In 1893 I had written from Chitral to a friend : “ I feel strangely inspired just now to devote my life to forming a new religion—or rather to reforming the old. All other work seems trivial in comparison. I feel as if I had it in me, if I could get a few years’ leisure quietly to think out my thoughts, to carry men to a truer religion than that they now profess ; and reading the life of Christ [I had then been reading Seely’s *Ecce Homo*, Renan’s *Life of Jesus*, and Didon’s *Jesus Christ*] and thinking over the deeds of other great religious leaders, seems to spur me on to do it. . . . What I feel most at present is the sacredness of the task which I believe lies before me : it is almost overpoweringly sacred. God seems to be pouring into me. And it won’t be work : it will be pouring out to others what has entered into myself . . . and the more I pour out the more there seems to come up within me.”

I had at first thought of leading a solitary life, but later in the same year I wrote : “ I have made up my mind not to seclude myself but to mix as much as I can with my fellow-men and go on with my ordinary work . . . and the chief reason why I want to go on with my usual life is that I want to *try* and practise the high ideals I have before me. So many men have written and preached high moral ideals, but they cannot influence one quarter the men they ought to because men do not know if they have acted up to—or *tried* to act up to—what they preach. The better life I can lead, honest and true to myself, the more good I shall be able to do by that final work of my

life. It was by His life more than by His words that Christ influenced men; and in that I shall try and follow His example."

Emerson also inspired me much at this time. He had written that each man had a natural bias and he should follow it out. "This is what I feel necessary in my own case." I wrote in my diary in April 1894: "My mind has a bent towards high social and religious problems, and if I can steadily and steadfastly follow out these inclinations it is by doing so that I shall effect the greatest good in the world." And in July I wrote: "Through all my life I have had from time to time the feeling that I was born for some great thing. Now I ought to recognise the divine spark within me—believe in myself—believe that I really can do great things—cherish the inspiration of divine things in me and make the most of it. . . . My aim would be to spend my life in trying to realise God—to seek out all the beauties of Nature and Human Nature; to seek God, seek out the inner meaning and spirit of all things; to find out what is the very highest and best towards which all things are tending. Then my life will of itself adapt itself to what is best and will lead others."

So set was I on leading the religious life that in August 1894, when I was thirty-one years old, I wrote to my father declaring my intention of leaving the Government service. "There is a spirit in me which can't be confined. I have ideals and ideas which I must have freedom to realise. I have decided, therefore, at the end of my two years' furlough, to retire from Government service and work out practically the religious, social, and scientific theories I have in mind. . . . I believe that what is wanted is religion. The only religion is, of course, the Christian religion, though not that grotesque, antiquated form

which preaches a God who punishes men with hell-fire eternally for going out to enjoy life on a Sunday, but the pure, simple Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount.”

I left India at the end of 1894, as I thought for good. But by April 1895 I was back in Chitral again. *The Times* had asked me to go as Special Correspondent with the expedition sent to relieve my successor who was besieged there. Then *The Times* asked me to go to South Africa and I witnessed and reported on the Jameson Raid and afterwards stayed with Cecil Rhodes in Rhodesia. After this I was persuaded to return to Government service in India and I am glad I accepted my friends' advice, for I was able to see much of Indian life in the interior of India. On the Frontier my work had lain wholly with Muslims and I used to enjoy converse with them on Islam. Now it lay principally with Hindus. I had very intimate personal relationships with Hindu Maharajas, Ministers and Pundits and, during the great famine of 1900, with the villagers. Indians are the people of all others who have a genius for religion. From converse with these holy men and the study with them of their sacred books I felt myself catching the true inner spirit of religion. And it was while I was enjoying this contact with Hinduism—and also studying Herbert Spencer—that I was suddenly summoned by Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, to lead a mission to Tibet. This was in 1903, nine years after he had been travelling with me on a short visit in Chitral.

Now again I was in my element. I was back in touch with Nature and amidst great mountains. And I had plenty of leisure for thought. In addition to learning what I could of Buddhism—for the Tibetans are Buddhist—I would read on the mountain side by day and in the quiet of my tent by night the books I most

desired. William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* had recently been published and did much to feed my soul, as well as Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and Schiller's *Riddle of the Sphinx*.

Besides the stimulus of great mountains, and vast plains, and glorious sunsets, I was stimulated more than at any other time by men. I had splendid men about me and we were keyed up to our topmost pitch by great enterprise. And when that venture had reached a successful climax and together we had turned the Tibetans from determined enemies into lasting friends, and received the congratulations of our Sovereign, I was naturally well pleased. I was even elated. But on the evening of the day I left Lhasa I had in solitude on the mountain side an experience which I have described elsewhere and which was more than elation: it was exaltation: it was an unbearable ecstasy. And it convinced me for ever of the goodness at the heart of the world and of every human being.

Thirty-two years have passed since then and I have seen much evil. Yet the sight of that evil has not shaken the conviction which then came to me that working through the universe is a power transforming the evil into good and surely making for a world in which such experiences would be as common as the joy of lovers is now.

After a period of leave in England I was appointed Resident in Kashmir, that most beautiful of countries, and was again among the mountains in which I was born. I spent three-and-a-half years there and then reverted to my original intention of leaving Government service, and, as I wrote in my diary in October 1909, devoting

myself to "my main object in life, the infusing of mankind with more religion, with a higher, deeper, broader and altogether more effective religion than any now prevalent."

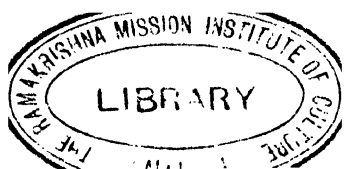
One of the first men I sought for advice on my return to England was the great Cambridge philosopher, McTaggart. I had read his book, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, and knew that he insisted on calling himself an atheist because he could not believe in the existence of a God as a completely outside and separate Being. But I knew also that he was opposed to the materialistic view of the universe, and as his was a great and exceptionally clear mind I was eager for his advice. He was a formidable person to approach, for he soon made clear that he would tolerate no haziness of thought or empty sentimentality. On the other hand, he would give his own opinions with great clarity and decision. We eventually became intimate friends and it turned out that on one or two occasions he had had experiences similar to mine on the mountain-side near Lhasa. But he never referred to them either in conversation with his friends or in his writings. They gave him personally a conviction of the true nature of things but he would not assume them as a foundation for his philosophy: he would build up his system by pure reasoning. He recognised the existence of pain and evil, but believed them necessary for the existence of a supreme good, namely, a love that was intense, passionate, and eternal. Evil, however great it might be, was only passing. Our lives—and he believed in re-incarnation—were gradually approximating to a final stage in which the good would infinitely exceed all the evil that ever had been. And the nature of that good would be "a timeless and endless state of love—love so direct, so intimate, and so powerful that even the

deepest mystic rapture gives us but the slightest foretaste of its perfection." So if McTaggart did not believe in God he did believe in Love. And he himself was of a most lovable character.

Bergson I also met at this time. His book, *Creative Evolution*, had recently appeared. I heard him lecture at Oxford on its central idea of the *élan vital*—the vital impetus—and I had an opportunity of speaking to him about Indian philosophy. He was the embodiment of combined intellectuality and spirituality. Not so "formidable" as McTaggart. More approachable and with more grace both in his speech and in his manner. But he also preached the doctrine of love. In his latest book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* he says that God is love, and the object of love. Divine love is not a thing of God : it is God Himself. In love mystics see the very essence of divinity and this love can be both a person and a creative power. God needs us just as we need God. Creation is God creating creatures that He may have, besides Himself, beings worthy of His love. The universe is the mere visible, tangible aspect of love, and of the need of love.

This view of things by two of the outstanding intellects of the day was very different from the crude materialism of Karl Marx, upon which Lenin was at that moment building up his system of revolution in Russia. So far as it made for the fairer distribution of material comfort and happiness that system may have been well enough. For material comfort and happiness are a necessary basis of spiritual happiness. No one can be happy on an empty stomach. But as a complete basis upon which to rebuild the life of a nation the materialistic philosophy seemed sadly lacking. And it was a relief to me to find both the fine intellect of the Frenchman and

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the massive intellect of the Englishman were decidedly and convincingly on the side of the spiritual view of things. And perhaps Lenin was not so much inveighing against religion as such. He probably knew little of religion. What he must have been seeking to destroy was a Church which supported the political system which he detested and those who taught the workers to be content with their poor lot in *this* life because they would be rewarded in the *next* life. Lenin, rightly, wanted them to fight for a better lot now.

While I was planning out a book to be called *The Aim of Humanity* I had an extraordinary experience which once again revealed to me the closeness of the unity of men—a unity which is quite inadequately expressed by the term brotherhood. I was run over by a motor car in Belgium and was brought literally to almost my last gasp as the result, for septic pneumonia ensued and I was only just pulled through. I suffered about as much pain as it is possible to suffer; but a year later that was clean forgotten, and the point I wish here to make is that the impression which has lasted is the extraordinary sympathy shown to me by persons who were complete strangers and who did not even know my name. A human being was perhaps being killed, and immediately the spectators' sympathy rushed out towards him. What hurt him hurt them. This I believe to be the ordinary, natural feeling of men towards one another. True, we are callous enough to a lot of suffering. And this may, perhaps, be an almost protective attitude; for if each of us allowed his sympathy to go out to all the suffering there is in the world we should be utterly exhausted and unable to get on with our own work. But when it is brought dramatically, in a flash, before us we instantly and naturally respond. And with joy as with

suffering. The sight of a bridal couple coming out of a church always delights the crowd.

From these experiences and from others which I have had with men of different races, religions, and degrees of culture, I have come to look upon the relationship between men as something far closer than that implied in the term brotherhood. To me, the kinship between men more nearly approaches to the spiritual affinity of lovers than to the blood-relationship of brothers.

As to the conception of the universe and our relationship to it which had now formed in my mind, I think it was best expressed during a discussion at a week-end joint-meeting of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association. It was with great diffidence and some trepidation that I presumed to speak before a gathering which included A. N. Whitehead, S. Alexander, and the late J. S. Haldane. But there was some discussion as to whether one's country could or could not be considered a person. I maintained that it could, as it could love and be loved, could make up its mind, issue orders, and have the will to see that they were carried out. I instanced my position on the Mission to Lhasa. I was an Englishman, a part of England. England made up her mind to send me to Tibet and gave me instructions what to do. All the time I was there I could feel her expecting me to act on certain lines and to refrain from acting on certain others—to treat the Tibetans with consideration and refrain from brutality. England certainly had a mind, and a will. She also inspired my love and she showed at least her regard for me, as she bestowed an honour on me for having served her well. I said that the universe was to me on a grand scale what my country was on a small. Like England, the universe had mind and will and feeling, and that mind and will and feeling

was what we called God. There were dissentients to the view. But Dr. J. S. Haldane was good enough to write to me the next day saying that my contribution appealed to him very strongly and seemed to express what is the essential basis of all religion.

A year later, on October 1st, 1925, I had another of those experiences which mean so much and which are yet so sacred one has the greatest repugnance from mentioning them. I will here merely transcribe a description of it written on that same day.

“For some weeks past I have been reading philosophical and religious books, and I have written two addresses. Also I have been finishing my book, *But in Our Lives*. My mind has therefore been full of thought on fundamental things and on God. And last night, as I lay in bed, I had a strong premonition that the power of the Spirit would come on me again as it had on two other occasions in my life, once on the evening of the day I left Lhasa, and the second time a few months later on, about February 1905, after I had come back from the Welsh Revival.

“But this time I *feared* it. I feared that I was not strong enough to bear it. [I was 62 years of age] I feared that it would overpower me and I meant to fight against it, to hold my own, and keep myself, and be myself. I wanted to keep my intellect clear so that I could think and not be swept away. All this I felt most strongly as I lay in bed, and I collected all my strength and all my presence of mind to resist the onrush when it should come. This was my frame of mind when I went to sleep.

“In the middle of the night, about three, I awoke ;

and I immediately knew that the Power was coming. I made one desperate effort to resist, and then it was on me. I felt it in my legs first. They were convulsed and shook violently. Then it came all over me till I was filled with it. And now I gave great *puffs*—as it were to blow the spirit out of me before it could overwhelm me. But I was filled and filled with it and could no more fight against it. It took absolute possession of me and I just settled down and lay there. Then a wonderful peace came on me, most beautiful and sweet, and a feeling of great *thankfulness*. I kept murmuring to myself: ‘I thank Thee, O God! I thank Thee.’

“And all to-day I have felt very *collected* and *composed* and full of *power*. I had been so afraid that if this came on me it would shatter me and I should become ‘nervy’. But it has been quite the contrary. I have felt steadied and reinforced. And the experience has strengthened my conviction that I must devote myself to religion—not exclusively, but mainly—and I feel now that I have added power to do this. I have a sense of the greatness of the work to be done, but I also feel the vital necessity of keeping myself in hand, of keeping my wits about me and my mind clear and strong. I have been able to work to-day at my addresses and not feel in the least jumpy at the usual interruptions and the ordinary annoyances of life. My nerves have been steadied instead of shattered. I also see more clearly into essentials. And that Power forcing its way so terrifically through me has had an extraordinary purging, purifying effect. I feel like the clear sky after a storm.”

Commenting on this experience on the following day I wrote: “One point in that experience needs much pondering over. Was I right or was I wrong in trying to resist the onrush of the Spirit? Ought I to have

submitted my will to the will of God and resigned myself wholly and submissively to whatever might come? And was I wrong in fearing and fighting against it?

"I believe I was right to fight. I was not exactly *opposing* my will to God's in the sense of wishing or trying to do something contrary to it. It was rather the feeling that if I were to carry out the will of God I must keep my own will firm and strong and in hand. Also that to carry it out I must have my intellect clear and not swamped by feeling.

"I have been reading the Life of Evan Roberts, the Welsh Revivalist again, and how he gave himself over entirely to the Spirit and would only do what the Spirit told him. I doubt whether this attitude is right. I think we must take up a stronger position than that. We have God in us. We are manifestations of God and His agents and representatives. He can only act through us, and apart from us cannot exist. Certainly we must do His will. We cannot help doing it. But we must keep strong hold over our own wills and our own intellects so as to be efficient agents and representatives.

"All last night I kept thinking over that line: 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine.' And I thought what a mistaken idea it was. We cannot make them God's. God made them ours. And as I lay in bed I would say to myself: 'Our wills are ours to keep them ours.'

"Anyhow I now feel intensely strengthened. I feel much more myself and at the same time much more filled with God, and better able to do His work. And there is no sense of dreaminess or cloudiness. All seems clear, and practical of the practical."

I have nearly finished my long account of how it came

about that I presumed to undertake the leadership of so great a project as organising a World Congress of Faiths. I have now to describe how I actually participated, twelve years ago, in a lesser Congress of the same nature.

Sir Denison Ross, in his introduction to the book of proceedings of that Congress, has told of its inception. It arose from a letter he had received from Mr. Loftus Hare at the beginning of 1923, suggesting the possibility of organising something in the nature of a Congress of Religions in connection with the British Empire Exhibition of 1924, for which Conferences on a number of diverse matters were then being planned. Sir Denison took the matter up and, as Director of the School of Oriental Studies with a life-long experience of Asiatics, was able to see it through to a most successful conclusion. He formed a Committee with Mr. Hare and Miss Sharples as Honorary Secretaries. The general idea was to familiarise those attending the lectures with the religions of the Empire and it was thought unnecessary to include Judaism and Christianity in the programme. The Committee honoured me with an invitation to deliver the opening address. And, in so far as it is relevant to the present Congress, I would here quote what I then said.

In the matter of religion the British Government, I argued, had to be impartial between the different religions professed by members of the British Empire. But impartiality need not mean indifference to religion. I believed that the heart of the British people was deeply stirred by religion and that in the future religion would occupy an increasing portion of our lives. Nothing short of religion could furnish the spirit in which alone the high affairs of great nations could be conducted. And the nations of the Empire were much more likely to work together in harmony if they saw that each set

store by such things of the spirit as good-fellowship, love of beauty, and love of truth than they would if each thought the other cared only for more luxurious food, clothing, houses, and motor cars. The British Empire should be a mighty agent in leading the nations of the earth along the paths which would bring them to that fellowship in which the principal rivalry would be, not of trade or territorial expansion, but of spiritual achievement.

Religion had been in the past a perpetual source of dissension. But an instrument which if carelessly used might be exceeding dangerous could with proper use be superlatively effective. Each might hold that his own religion was more completely perfect than any other. But even then he might recognise that God revealed Himself in many ways and that to followers of other religions God might have revealed what could be of value to them.

Diversity in point of view must inevitably exist. "One star differeth from another." And if stars differed, how much more human beings! Yet with the diversity there might also be unity. The one required and presupposed the other. Our business at the Conference clearly was to consolidate the unity. We might have to battle stoutly for our differences, but we need never lose faith that all the time there was an underlying and over-arching harmony which would reconcile them all. The very battling might force us to discipline our tempers and put forth the utmost best of ourselves. And we might then achieve a fellowship in which the chief rivalry between its members would be in height of spiritual attainment.

I expressed the hope that the present Conference would stir in men a spirit of emulation—of emulation in

capturing more and more successfully that Divine Spirit which animated the world, and in achieving a purer holiness and a sweeter saintliness of life. And looking on ahead, I suggested that as we became more used to meeting together and hearing candid statements of each other's points of view, future Conferences might frankly discuss religious truth. With an unwavering faith that truth led only to good and good was only strengthened by truth, might we not discuss the great ultimate problems of life—the nature of the world we lived in, our relation to it, the aims we ought to have, and the way to reach them?

These were the views I expressed in 1924. Thus, thirteen years ago I was already practically interested in Congresses of Religion.



## CHAPTER TWO



### THE INCEPTION OF THE IDEA

HOW I PERSONALLY CAME TO BE INTERESTED IN HOLDING a World Congress of Faiths and thereby promoting the spirit of fellowship has been related in the last chapter. But the idea itself is no new one. Other such Religious Congresses have been held in other countries. India, one of the special homes of religion, had held such Congresses centuries ago. The great Buddhist king, Asoka, had assembled the leading men of religion as far back as about 250 B.C. Akbar, the broad-minded Muslim Emperor, had in 1580 gathered together Hindus and Christians as well as Muslims to try and discover some religion which all could follow. 26727

And Mr. Loftus Hare, in *Religions of the Empire*, has given an account of the various Religious Congresses which have been held in modern times. The first was "The World's Parliament of Religions" held in Chicago in 1893. The object was to bring together in conference the leading representatives of the great historic religions and show men the important truths the various religions hold and teach in common. The initiators of the Congress desired thereby to promote and deepen the spirit of human brotherhood, and bring the nations of the earth into a more friendly fellowship, in the hope of securing permanent international peace.

The Congress lasted seventeen days and over one-hundred-and-seventy papers were presented—though none were discussed in public. The majority of these were subsequently published. And perhaps the Congress

is chiefly remarkable for the opportunity it afforded to the then unknown but now widely celebrated Swami Vivekenanda to make himself known and proclaim the message of his master, Ramakrishna, to the world.

The ground had been broken and in 1900 there was founded in Paris an International Congress of the History of Religions which was repeated at Basle in 1904, at Oxford in 1908, at Leiden in 1912 and again in Paris in 1924. These Congresses were essentially meetings of scholars for the purpose of study, and the method employed was strictly "scientific". The desire was to know rather than to feel, though, as always, feeling could not be entirely excluded from the knowing.

After this we return to Chicago. There in 1933—again on the occasion of a World's Fair—was held what was called The First International Congress of the World Fellowship of Faiths. It was initiated and organised by an Indian, Kedarnath Das Gupta, and an American, Charles Weller. Its President was His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda, who came to Chicago to deliver an address. The underlying idea of this Congress was most decidedly fellowship and not knowledge. It was no assembly of scholars and the method was by no means scientific. But the two organisers were firmly imbued with the idea of fellowship and had spent four years in organising what was really more a series of meetings than a Congress. There was, said Bishop McConnell, a former President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, no intention to form a synthetic faith out of the various elements contributed by different world faiths; but fellowship between these religions, as they are and as they aspire to be in the common attempt to solve man's deepest problems, was the very heart of the movement.

The results of this Congress were published in a book edited by Mr. Weller and entitled *World Fellowship*. It condensed and co-ordinated the 242 addresses delivered by 199 spokesmen in 83 meetings.

I was not able to attend the Congress in Chicago in 1933, but I accepted an invitation to speak at an extension of it in New York in 1934 and at other meetings of the Fellowship in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago. I greatly admired the energy, courage and pertinacity with which Mr. Das Gupta and Mr. Weller had organised these meetings practically by themselves; and I was whole-heartedly in favour of the main idea of forming a World Fellowship of Faiths. But when they suggested to me that I should join in organising a second Congress in London, I saw that here we had facilities for such a purpose that neither Chicago nor New York possessed, and that therefore it would be both possible and desirable to organise the second Congress in a more compact way than the first.

London is the capital city of an Empire which includes about 260 million Hindus, 77 million Muslims and about 12 million Buddhists, besides Jews and Christians. There are many Englishmen in London who have spent years of their lives in personal contact with these non-Christians, who have studied their religions and known their characters. Prominent adherents of all these religions are always to be found in London. And with the help of these Englishmen of Eastern experience and of eminent Hindus and Muslims resident in London, the task of organising a Congress should be much easier than the task the organisers of the Chicago Congress had to face.

Then the London organisers would have the benefit

of the experience gained in Chicago and, profiting by it, should be able to organise a more concentrated and effective Congress.

When therefore I joined with Mr. Das Gupta in taking the preliminary steps towards organising a Congress, I saw that we should have to get together a meeting of prominent persons of all Christian denominations and of all religions and at that meeting have a Council and its Chairman formally elected, leaving to the Council the task of appointing its own Executive Committee.

Sir Denison Ross, who had been Chairman of the Congress ten years before, I naturally approached. He was in the throes of moving the habitat of the School of Oriental Studies besides being busy upon many another useful activity, so he could not actively engage in organising another Congress ; but he helped me greatly with advice and encouragement. And Sir Evelyn Wrench, the founder of the Overseas League and the English Speaking Union, was not only sympathetic but lent a room in 9 Arlington Street for our first two meetings. Then Mr. Polak, who for years has had such close contact with Indians not only in his business legal capacity but as a fervent sympathiser with their religious and political aspirations, gave me invaluable advice in the important initial stages ; as also did Sir Philip Hartog, who for five years had been the President of a University in India as well as Chairman of an Indian Educational Commission.

I was most grateful too for warm encouragement from two prominent Church leaders. Close by me in the country lives Bishop Welldon, who was Bishop of Calcutta some thirty years ago. We had many talks about the proposed Congress. He said he had met with the greatest courtesy in India from leading Hindus and Muslims and he was strongly in favour of men of the

different religions meeting together to promote the spirit of fellowship. Owing to physical disability he would not be able to take active part in the Congress, but he was good enough to write articles about it and tell his friends of it, and to give me personally the greatest encouragement by his enthusiasm. Hardly less warm was Canon "Dick" Sheppard. He had not the knowledge of Indians that Bishop Welldon possessed but he had the same bigness of heart and breadth of vision.

Then I began to look about for support from non-Christians resident in London. Of Hindus I was able to gain the sympathy of Sir Atul Chatterji, who had been first High Commissioner for India in London and was now on the Council of India at the India Office; and of Sir Shadi Lal on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Sir Abdul Qadir, another member of the Council of India, gave me his support as a Muslim. The learned Mrs. Rhys Davids, who had served on the Committee of the Congress of Living Religions of the Empire, supported me in matters relating to Buddhists. Dr. Israel Mattuck, the Minister of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, and Sir Herbert Samuel ensured me support from many Jews. And Sir Reginald Johnstone, who had been for many years private tutor to the young Chinese Emperor, gave me advice about support from Confucians.

From the side of Independent Religious Thought I was able to obtain great help from M. Saurat, the distinguished Principal of the French Institute in London. And from the scientific point of view, from the late Dr. J. S. Haldane.

So I went on gaining supporters, keeping to the principle that from the first I must have the best men with me. I must seek first for quality: the quantity

would then follow. It is the aristocratic principle ; but democracy itself has to have leaders. There is no democracy which does not have an element of aristocracy in it—a choice of the best. It must be controlled and guided by men who are in closest contact with the essential Spirit of the Universe and act in conformity with what we can find out of the fundamental universal laws. And it was such men that I was looking for and seeking to bring together to organise the Congress.

It was not an easy task for, quite naturally, leading men hesitated to give their names to a project which was still in the air. I could not even say that the money was there. I could express my faith that if the people could see that the proposed Congress was well supported spiritually, as I might express it, the money would come in all right in the end. I had to show a faith in human nature which I am glad to say was subsequently justified.

Another difficulty was the compunction many leading Christians had to joining a Congress on terms of equality with representatives of other religions. I shall refer to this matter later. Here I will only mention it as one of my main difficulties. When I had to show the list of my supporters, the names of leaders of the Church of England were conspicuous by their absence. It was only from men below the leaders that I got encouragement.

However, I did manage to get some fifty fairly representative men and women of all the great religions of the world to meet at 9, Arlington Street on November 12th, 1934, and discuss the project.

I explained to them the main idea in holding a Congress, and reminded the meeting of what had been done in the London Congress in 1924 and the Chicago Congress of 1933. I said I had spent the best years of my life working on terms of fellowship with Hindus,

Buddhists, and Muslims and derived the greatest profit and enjoyment from the intercourse. I had been impressed by the devoutness and devotion of these men of other faiths. But I had also noticed that they too had been impressed by the Christian faith. I would not say that the creeds and formulas of Christianity had much attraction for them. Yet these Asiatics were quite obviously very deeply impressed by the spirit of Jesus, and by such fruits of that spirit as the noble life of many a Christian missionary, the great hospitals of Christian countries, and the social service for the poor and needy. With this experience behind me, the mutual benefit to be derived from such a fellowship as that now proposed was evident.

Some might not wish to take part in the Congress on the ground that they already belonged to a religious body with age-long traditions built up by saints and martyrs and great theologians, and that therefore they had nothing to gain by attending the Congress. But, I argued, even supposing they had nothing to gain, they had much to give. Here was a unique opportunity of giving it. And what they had to give would be most gratefully received.

Others, again, of every religion, being convinced that their own was the only perfect religion, might think themselves as necessarily in conflict with what they would consider false religions. But what they might lack in terms of fellowship, I reasoned, they might make up for in terms of faith. They were men of great faith. And by their example, and even by their opposition, they might stimulate a more fervent faith in others. So their contribution, too, would be appreciated.

Equally acceptable would be contributions by those who belonged to none of the great organised religions

but who had a deep faith of their own and who on the strength of that faith devoted earnest lives to promoting the object of their worship, believing that they were thereby advancing the welfare of mankind.

Differences would, indeed, be fully recognised, allowed for, respected, and even welcomed. We would delight in diversity. Where we differed we would differ in a spirit of fellowship and understanding. There would be no attempt to force men into one mould. No two men ever were alike or ever could be made alike. Each man had his own individual character. Each man had in him an insistent urge to preserve his individuality. And though the outlook of the Congress might be world-wide, yet the individuality of every single person, or group of persons, would be most scrupulously respected and preserved to the full.

Efforts would be made to take a world-view, to develop a world-consciousness, and to create a sense of world fellowship: and a world-soul might result from these efforts. But such world-soul would never be allowed to stifle the soul of the individual. Rather would we wish the soul of each different part in the one great whole preserved and developed.

Yet we would urge no less emphatically that every individual must be inspired by a feeling for the whole—that amongst all must be the strongest *esprit-de-corps* for every larger whole to which each belonged—his family, profession, country, mankind, and finally the one great all-inclusive whole, the whole universe. There would be differences, but there must be fellowship. And the deepening and widening of the fellowship would be the main aim of the Congress. We would have human fellowship intensified to a degree not short of divine.



The conception of a unity of differences, of differentiation in unity, of the reciprocal need of the whole for the part and the part for the whole—the view of men as being transformed from a crowd or collection into the fellowship of a choir—was, in my opinion, the basic conception upon which the Congress should be founded, for that was a fundamental principle of the universe which needed world-wide expression.

As to the actual programme of the Congress, I suggested that, to give men an idea of the direction which the human race should take, and of the world-order after which it should strive, outstanding representatives of the great faiths of the world from many countries should be invited to England to address public meetings on what they considered to be the highest perfection of goodness—on the universal, unsurpassable spiritual ideal. “The Supreme Ideal”, I suggested, might be a suitable title for these addresses; and each speaker would be expected to indicate the objective, the final aim, which mankind should set before itself—to hold aloft the ideal by which men should direct their lives. So would they give direction to the world-soul.

Besides these public meetings in which the factor of unity would be more particularly stressed, and in which the main appeal would be to the emotions and to the ideal, I suggested that there might be smaller meetings confined to members of the Congress. In these one of the major problems of the times might be discussed and solutions suggested; and the main appeal would be to the reason and the practical. And I urged that only one problem should be taken up, because by working together for a single common end and concentrating on the one subject, the sense of fellowship would be fostered and the risk of diffusion avoided.

Well before the meeting of the Congress, the selected problem might be clearly stated by some recognised authority and the statement then sent to representative spiritual leaders in different countries, each of whom might be asked to write a paper offering a solution of the problem in accordance with his own faith. These papers might then be collected together in book form and made available for members before the Congress met. Each such paper would then be read by its author and discussed at Sessions of the Congress.

Discussion would be a new feature at such a Congress of men of different faiths. And I said that, having regard to the explosive nature of religion, and to the heat engendered when men of different faiths met in discussion, many might think it wiser to avoid anything like discussion. But I argued that in this case it would not be on the merits or defects of the different faiths : only on how the principles and inspiration of these faiths could be brought to bear upon the solution of a definite present-day problem. Those who took part in it might be persuaded, for the sake of the great end of fellowship, so to school themselves as to preserve their equanimity even under direct provocation. Such meetings should be a magnificent school in the great art of fellowship. And if participators in the discussion could thus discipline themselves, much good might accrue. For opposition was bracing : it arrested degeneration, and it stimulated effort to reach a higher ground upon which opposer and opposed might agree. Conducted under those conditions, discussion should be vitalising, adding zest and interest to the whole proceedings, and keeping them in touch with the everyday life of the world.

In addition to these formal meetings I suggested that

there might be social gatherings which would afford opportunities for forming friendships. And occasions might be found for that intimate communion which is the culmination of all great fellowship.

As a result of the mutual stimulation of one another by the followers of different faiths from many lands, and of sharing in a common endeavour to solve one of the world's great problems, it was expected that human fellowship would accentuate itself into divine communion. Fellows would have put themselves in tune with the universe—with the whole great living, throbbing, rhythmic universe of which each lowliest man was an absolutely necessary constituent part.

The growing fervency of the fellowship would go far to dispel hatred, malice, and suspicion and to implant in their place that spirit of good-will for which statesmen, social reformers and industrialists alike were perpetually crying out as an essential pre-requisite of all bread-winning activities, and which was of more downright practical use in life than all the wealth of a million millionaires.

If, in addition, the Congress should result in bringing to light just one religious genius, it would indeed be fortunate beyond compare. If there should be found a genius in the supreme act of kindling fellowship with that divine spark which was glowing, however dimly, in the heart of every single human being, then for that alone the Congress would be ten thousand times worth while.

The meeting agreed in the main with these proposals and elected a provisional Council who would appoint an Executive Committee to put more detailed proposals before a meeting of the Council to be held in January. Of this Council, on the motion of Sir Evelyn Wrench,

seconded by Sir Ronald Storrs, I was elected Chairman.

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Thus it was that my original personal aims of forty years before and the aims of men in organising Congresses of Religion came to be combined. I was in a position to help men fulfil what was slowly stirring in their hearts.

## CHAPTER THREE



### EXECUTION OF THE IDEA

OUR FIRST CARE WAS TO FIND A ROOF UNDER WHICH we could shelter. The All People's Association let us have a room for a few months. Then, at Miss Storey's particular wish, we moved to 17, Bedford Square, to the beautiful rooms which she had given to the Society for Promoting the Study of Religions and which that Society kindly allowed us to share with them. And that for the remainder of the time was the headquarters of the Congress.

Finance ought to have troubled us at this period. Somehow it never did. Miss Storey gave us a very generous contribution and all who were interested gave something. We did talk of having a Guarantee Fund. But as contributions kept steadily coming in and more than keeping pace with the expenditure, that suggestion was never acted upon.

More important than Finance was the composition of the Executive Committee who would have to do all the real work of the Congress. Here we were fortunate in having Miss Sharples, who had been one of the Honorary Secretaries who had organised the London Congress in 1924. Then Mr. Arthur Jackman, the Publicity Secretary of the Theosophical Society, kindly helped us all he could in his spare time, and during the last year became full-time Secretary of the Congress and was the main instrument of success. Monsieur Saurat was good enough to agree to serve on the Committee and all through was most helpful, not only in

securing the attendance of eminent Frenchmen but also with his general advice. Sir Herbert Samuel became a regular attendant at Committee meetings and was a sure prop to them. So, too, was the well-known F. H. Brown of *The Times*. While Miss Beatrix Holmes attended almost daily at the office, ready to do any job however laborious that needed doing.

At our first meeting I opened proceedings by saying that we must be willing to encounter difficulties, disappointments, and disillusionments but we must be prepared for them and keep always in view the great end we had set ourselves—the greatest we could have. We had to give a spiritual lead to mankind.

As to practical details, we had to gain additional supporters, especially a few “key-persons” as I called them. Then we had to suggest to the Council the problem which should be selected for discussion at the Congress and the names of the persons we should invite to address us. Finally we had to get our objects known and raise funds.

The first formal meeting of the Council was held on January 21st, 1935, and the general lines of the Congress were then formally approved. It was to open on Friday, July 3rd, 1936, with a Public Meeting of Welcome at the Queen’s Hall. During the following week there were to be Sessions, morning and afternoon, when the selected problem would be discussed, and also two Public Meetings in the Queen’s Hall. In the week after, the Congress would adjourn to Oxford and meet in one of the Colleges. There would be a Farewell Meeting at the Queen’s Hall. And it was hoped that it would be possible to obtain permission for the Congress as a body to attend a service in St. Paul’s on one Sunday afternoon and Canterbury Cathedral on another.

After considerable discussion the subject selected was the one proposed by M. Saurat : " World-Fellowship through Religion." And it was definitely decided that discussion on it should not only be allowed but invited and arranged for. Twenty addresses would be delivered on that subject ; and the apportionment of those between representatives of the various religions caused much anxious thought and in the end did not escape criticism. We decided that the Sessions should commence with an address by someone who was well acquainted with the chief religions of the world and who, while retaining his own faith, was thoroughly sympathetic with the faith of others. Then we decided that Hinduism and Christianity should each have four representatives, Islam three, Buddhism two, Confucianism and Judaism one each. Besides these, there should be one representative of modern religious movements, one of independent religious thought, one of philosophy, and one of science.

I had to report that for various reasons Rudyard Kipling, Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, Jeans and Eddington had all expressed their inability to support the Congress. I consoled myself with the homely and heartening but quite untrue adage that there are just as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. And we gradually accustomed ourselves to such " blows ". Indeed, every morning as we began work one or other would invariably ask : " Well, what's the blow to-day ? " Blows and good news had a tight race for it. But in the long run blows could not stand the pace and good news won.

The first really good news was about St. Paul's. I went to Canon Sheppard and enlisted his sympathy ; and though I have no doubt there were qualms among some members of the Chapter at such an innovation as

granting our request to allow Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists, as well as Christians, to attend a service, I did in due course receive a letter from the Dean—Dean Matthews—granting our request, and a little later a reply to the same effect from the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson. This encouragement meant a great deal to us. It would have great influence in inducing men of the first rank to take the trouble to come from such far away countries as Japan, China, and India to address us. A Congress which was to be admitted to these historic shrines of the Church of England must be of some account. It would be worth while coming to address it.

While these negotiations were taking place, we drew up a small pamphlet on the subject chosen for discussion, namely: "World Fellowship through Religion." Fellowship implied unity, and the sense of fellowship was latent in every man—of fellowship with his fellow-men, and of kinship with all living things and with the whole universe. But what was merely latent needed first to be positively realised and then intensified till it was consummated in beneficent action. For, until the unity was actualised, the equally fundamental diversity of men was apt to bring them into harmful conflict rather than enlightening contrast. So the Congress would focus its efforts upon emphasising the fundamental unity.

The main hindrances to the establishment of any world-wide or any intimate fellowship between men of different faiths, and of different races, nationalities and ways of looking at things, we believed were (a) fear, suspicion, hatred, and other forms of spiritual inability which led to wars between nations and conflicts between individuals, (b) nationalism in excess or defect, (c) racial



antagonism and race domination, (*d*) religious differentiation, (*e*) class domination, (*f*) poverty, (*g*) ignorance. How these obstacles to forming any true fellowship could be overcome would be the one problem before the Congress—whether it be by the aid of (1) Education (literary, scientific, philosophic, or religious), (2) improved economic conditions, (3) drama, music, or other forms of art, (4) the examples of saintly and heroic lives held up for emulation, (5) prayer, (6) concentrated meditation upon the supremely perfect things in life, (7) sharing spiritual experiences, (8) common pursuit of Truth, common enjoyment of Beauty, common deeds of Charity, common worship of a God common to all mankind ; or by any other means.

Each selected representative spokesman would not be expected to deal with all the above-mentioned hindrances, or with all the suggested aids to overcoming them. Each would be invited to deal only with that particular one, or with those few with which he felt himself most competent to deal. But taken together these addresses would, we hoped, give a good basis for the discussion of the problem.

The selection of these twenty speakers occupied our time almost up to the commencement of the Congress itself. One or other was continually failing. They had to be brought from literally the ends of the earth, and men from thousands of miles away cannot readily engage themselves for an event to take place more than a year ahead. But in choosing a speaker for the opening address there was no difficulty. There was to hand the ideal person. Mr. Yusuf Ali was a Muslim—and a true Muslim—but through his life he had been in close relationship with men of other religions. He had joined the Indian Civil Service in 1895 and acted as Judge and

Deputy Commissioner. Since his retirement he had travelled in China and Japan studying Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. He was married to an English lady who remained a Christian. And he was now Principal of the Islamic College in Lahore. Thus he had been in touch with the great religions of the world in the life, and not merely in the study. I had known him for years and was deeply gratified when he at once accepted our invitation.

A Hindu whom I would most have liked to obtain could not be induced to come. I had hardly expected Arabindo Ghose's consent for I knew that for years he had lived a life of seclusion and that the glare of a great Congress would have been highly distasteful to him. But he was of that intensely spiritual type whom we in the West would most like to meet and learn to revere as the Indians do. He was highly intellectual as well as deeply spiritual. Years ago he had passed in England the very severe examination for the Indian Civil Service, but had been unable to pass some practical test. He had returned disheartened to India, become a brilliant journalist, fallen foul of the authorities, been obliged to leave British India, had been settled for many years now in Pondicherry in French India, had given up politics and devoted himself exclusively to religion, and was now looked upon by Hindus with almost greater respect than any other living person. I had read some of his writings and felt that to secure him alone the organising of this Congress would have been worth while.

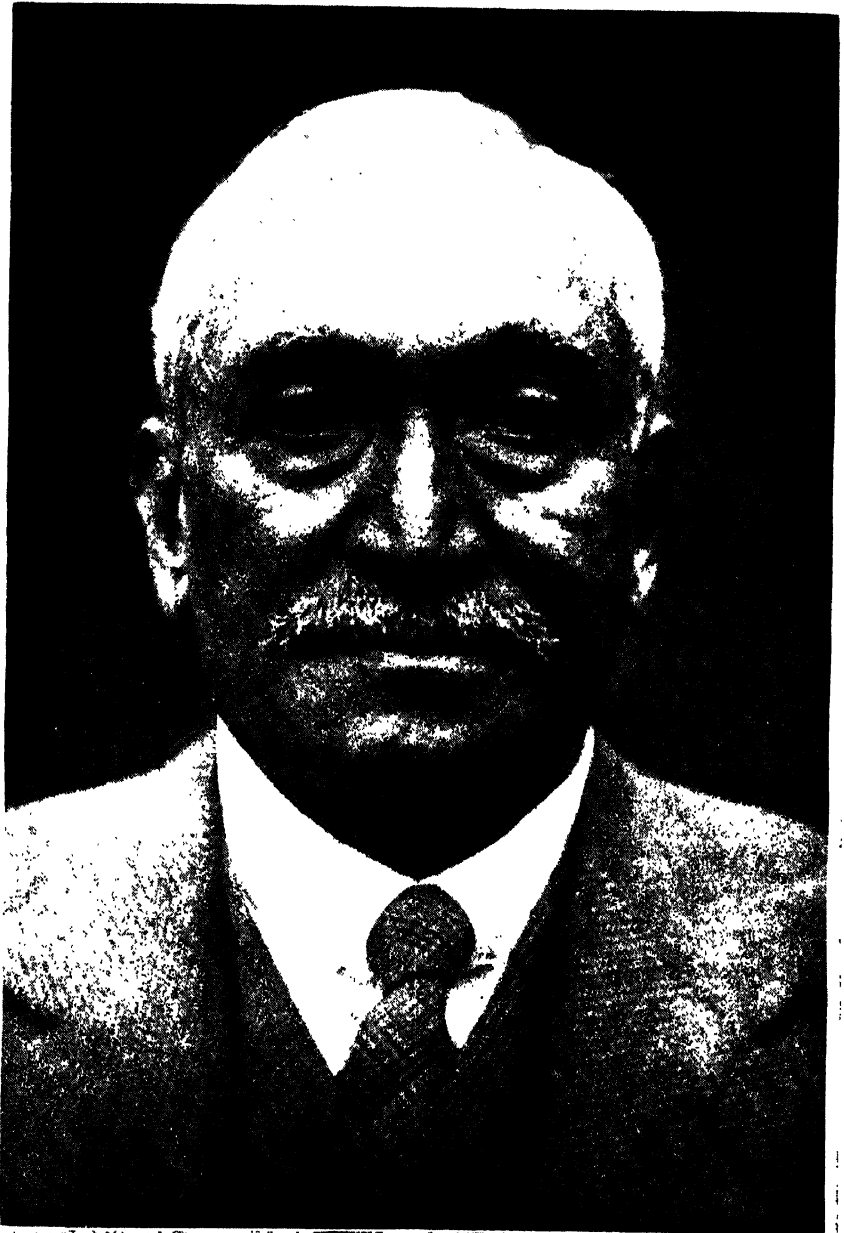
Yet we did secure a Hindu in some ways even more remarkable; for instead of retiring into seclusion he had lived in the midst of life. This was Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan—better known as Professor Radhakrishnan who had just been selected as the first holder of

the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University of Oxford. He was already known in England as a brilliant lecturer, having delivered the Hibbert Lectures in 1929. He had been Professor of Philosophy in Calcutta University, and for the last five years Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University, Waltair, Southern India. He was one of the finest flowers of combined intellectuality and spirituality that India had produced.

Another Hindu thought highly of by British philosophers was Professor S. N. Das Gupta (no relation of the Kedarnath Das Gupta who had been working in America). He was Principal of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta, had already published two volumes of a great work, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, had represented Cambridge University at the Inter-Allied Congress of Philosophy in Paris in 1921, and lectured at many universities in India, England, and America.

Younger and less well-known than these two was Professor Mahendranath Sircar, Professor of Philosophy in the Presidency College, Calcutta, and author of *Hindu Mysticism*, *Comparative Studies in the Vedanta*, and other books. He was an ardent admirer of Arabindo Ghose and was inclined to the meditative, mystical side of Hindu life.

As a representative of Northern Buddhism we were specially anxious to secure Dr. Suzuki from Japan. I wrote and invited him. He replied that he was too engaged with present work to come such a long distance. I cabled to America to my friend Mr. Charles Crane, begging him to induce Suzuki to come. In a few days came the reply that Suzuki was coming as Mr. Crane's guest. And here in an interlude I must say something of Mr. Crane himself. He is now over eighty years of age



*Art Photo Service*

YUSAF ALI

*Muslim*



and head of a very big business with headquarters in Chicago and branches extending all over the United States, but from his youth he had been interested in Asiatics and for two or three months every year he had left his business to travel in some Asiatic country. In later years he had represented the United States in the Near East, in China, and in Japan. He was a wonderful combination of great natural shrewdness and the warmest kindliness of heart. No one more than he appreciated the intentions and the work of the Congress and nothing gave me greater pleasure than seeing him among us. But to return to Suzuki: his full name was Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, he was the author of several books on Zen Buddhism, since 1920 had been Professor of Buddhist Philosophy in the Otani University at Kyoto, and since 1921 editor of the *Eastern Buddhist*.

As representative of Southern Buddhism we were able to get Professor Malalasekara of Colombo University, Ceylon, who had already been to England and was regarded by the Buddhists of Ceylon as thoroughly representative of them.

A Muslim whom I had set my heart on getting was Sir Mahomed Iqbal. I had met him here in England at the time of the Indian Round Table Conference and I knew from my friend McTaggart how highly he regarded Iqbal when he was studying philosophy at Cambridge. I knew also with what reverence he was regarded by Muslims. For he is a great poet, in Persian and Urdu, as well as a philosopher and a politician. His poems are known throughout the Muslim world, and he would have been an ideal representative of Islam at such a Congress as ours. But though I wrote twice I could not persuade him. He had just lost his wife and he could not bring himself to leave his family and come so far.

Here in London itself there was, however, a highly respected Muslim, Sir Abdul Qadir, who not only consented to deliver an address but was one of our chief props on the Council. He was now member of the Council of India at the India Office and he had been Judge of the High Court in Lahore, President of the Punjab Legislative Council, and an Indian delegate to the League of Nations Assembly. And very fortunate we were to have a paper from Sheikh El Maraghi, the Rector of the Al Hazar University in Cairo (the oldest university in the world) and a former President of the Mohammedan Supreme Law Court. He was not able to be present himself, but he sent his son to deliver his address on his behalf.

The above Muslims were all of the Sunni branch and we had hoped to have a Shiah Muslim from Persia. We had heard of a prominent Minister who would have well suited our purposes. The misfortune was that he was put into jail a few days before my letter reached him.

Of the great modern movement of the Bahais which had sprung from Islam we had hoped that Shoghi Effendi, the present revered head, would be able to be present. He wrote me a most courteous letter in reply to my invitation, regretting that his duties prevented him from being present in person but promising to have an address prepared and read on his behalf.

As representative of Judaism we invited Dr. Magnes, President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and he kindly accepted our invitation, though owing to subsequent troubles he was unable to be present in person at the Congress.

Coming nearer home to representatives of Christianity, we were able to secure an excellent representative of the Greek Orthodox Church in Professor Nicholas Berdiaeff,

who had come through the revolution in Russia but had suffered several terms of imprisonment and had finally been exiled in 1922. Afterwards he had founded a Religious Philosophical Academy in Berlin and transferred to Paris in 1924. He was the Editor of *The Way* and author of several books, including *Freedom and the Spirit* and *The Meaning of History*.

Through M. Saurat we were able to secure the promise of an address by M. Massignon who, though he had started life with a somewhat critical attitude towards religion and had spent much of his life in the study of Islam in Islamic countries, was now a fervent Roman Catholic. As a suitable representative of the Church of England for our particular purpose we were glad to have Rev. P. T. R. Kirk, the General Director of the Industrial Christian Fellowship. And a very worthy representative of the Nonconformist Churches was Rev. J. S. Whale, President of Cheshunt College, Cambridge, formerly Minister of Bowden Downs Congregational Church, Manchester, and Mackennal Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Mansfield College, Oxford.

As representing Science we were peculiarly fortunate in securing a paper from the late Professor J. S. Haldane, who had held both the Royal Medal, and the Copley Medal of the Royal Society, and was the author of several books of a combined scientific and philosophical character, including *The Philosophy of a Biologist*, *Materialism*, *Mechanism*, *Life*, and *Personality*, etc.

The Austrian Dr. W. J. Stein kindly agreed to represent philosophy. He was the editor of *The Present Age* and author of *Die moderne naturwissenschaftliche Vorstellungsart und die Weltanschauung Goethes*, etc.

Again through M. Saurat, we were able to secure M. Jean Schlumberger to represent independent religious



thought. He was a novelist and essayist of distinction, one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, and author of *Sur les frontières Religieuses*, etc. And as representing modern religious movements Professor Emile Marcault kindly accepted our invitation. He was Professor of Psychology and French Literature at the University of Claremont 1909-17, and of Psychology at the University of Pisa 1917-1924. He was a member of the Theosophical Society and had studied modern religious developments.

Our greatest difficulty was to find someone to represent Confucianism. One Chinese whom we had thought had definitely agreed to come subsequently expressed himself unable to attend, and Confucianism would have remained unrepresented if Mr. S. I. Hsiung, the author of *Lady Precious Stream*, had not almost at the last moment kindly consented to relieve us of our anxiety.

Another who kindly came to our aid at the last moment was Dr. Ranji Shahani. Sirdar Mohan Singh had fallen ill and not been able to complete the paper he had meant to read us, and Dr. Shahani at great inconvenience took his place. He had studied in Paris for some years, was a D. Litt. (Sorbonne), and had written on literary and philosophical subjects. He was also the author of *Towards the Stars, Shakespeare through Eastern Eyes*, etc.

All the above were respective readers of addresses on the theme of the Congress, namely, How to promote the spirit of World Fellowship through Religion. While we were engaging these we had at the same time to find speakers for the Public Meetings on "The Supreme Spiritual Ideal" from the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Independent points of view. Radhakrishnan and Suzuki, in addition to speaking at the Sessions, would speak at these Queen's Hall Meetings from the

Hindu and Buddhist view-point respectively. Then Canon Barry—though he had to break his holiday to do it—agreed to give the Christian view. He was a Canon of Westminster and Chaplain to H.M. the King, and I had heard him deliver a most eloquent and fitting sermon at Westminster Abbey on the very morning of the Sunday on which King George died. Rudyard Kipling had also died a few days before, and only on the Saturday evening had Canon Barry been told that it would be advisable to make references to both in his sermon at the following morning service. It was a most trying occasion but he fulfilled the difficult task to perfection. Both thought and sentiment were expressed in perfect language and, to all seeming, without a note to help him.

To represent the Jewish view Dr. Israel Mattuck, so well known in London both for his eloquence and for his breadth of outlook, kindly accepted our invitation. He was Chairman of the Jewish Religious Union for the Advancement of Liberal Judaism, and also Chairman of the Executive of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and of the Society of Jews and Christians.

Then we were specially glad to have that very remarkable Turkish lady, Madame Helidé Edib, to present the Muslim view. She had, I have heard, fought in the Turkish Army. She had certainly carried on a courageous campaign for women's freedom in Turkey. She had been Professor of Western Literature in Istanbul University. And she had written, in English, several books, including *Memoirs*, *Turkish Ordeal*, *Turkey Faces West*.

Lastly, to represent an independent view, the Polish writer Rom Landau kindly undertook to speak. His recently published book, *God is my Adventure*, had been

very favourably received ; he was well acquainted with modern religious developments on the Continent ; and he was an advocate of a spiritual, non-dogmatic, non-sectarian Christianity.

In choosing someone of distinction to open the whole proceedings and welcome the Congress, we again had disappointments. Owing to the death of King George no member of the Royal Family could be invited to honour us. The Heads of the Church were lukewarm about the Congress. All leading statesmen were far too occupied in dealing with crisis after crisis over the Abyssinian adventure, and were too weary at the close of a Parliamentary Session to pledge themselves for a particular night. Then the brilliant idea struck us that for giving a welcome to the Congress a lady would be a more fitting person than a man, especially as here in England we are fortunate in possessing such very able and accomplished women in public life. No more fitting person than Dame Elizabeth Cadbury could be desired, and she very graciously consented to do this delicate task for us.

While all these negotiations were being pursued, we were also looking for an appropriate hall in which to hold the Congress. At one time we contemplated meeting in the London County Council Hall, and the Council were good enough to give us permission to use it—but only for a few days. We then sought and obtained the permission of the Provost of University College to use the Great Hall for the week the Congress would be in London. This was most satisfactory, as there would be ample room in the grounds for that walking about with members after a Session which is so valuable for fellowship purposes. In our search for the use of a College at Oxford we failed. All that were suitable at the time we

should want a College were engaged. We had therefore to readjust our original plan and have the whole Congress in London. It was disappointing in some ways, as we had much desired the atmosphere of an Oxford College. But by staying in London we avoided a break in the continuity of the Congress, and the Provost of University College was kind enough to let us have the use of the Hall for the full fortnight.

The whole question of getting the proposed Congress known had now to be examined. We drew up a Prospectus and posted about 5,000 copies. But as with most prospectuses, a good ninety per cent. must have gone into the waste paper basket. We also had posters placed on Underground Stations. We wrote articles in magazines. And we induced Editors to put paragraphs in religious papers. Our chief effort, though, was a luncheon to the Press on a date about a month before the Congress was to commence. I there gave a full account of our aims and plans and tried to persuade the Press representatives that it would be an event of outstanding importance—in my own opinion, more important than any other in the world, for it was laying the foundation of a new world order.

Another step we took was to persuade the B.B.C. to let me deliver a radio address shortly before the Congress met. Such arrangements need to be made nearly a year ahead, and we were gratified that the B.B.C. authorities agreed to our request.

In another and most important direction we also met with success. With the support of Sir Herbert Samuel I approached Mr. Ormsby-Gore, then First Commissioner of Works, in regard to the Government giving the Congress a Reception at Lancaster House. I pointed out the importance of such a Congress as we were organising

and showed him the support we were receiving. To our great gratification a reply came from him that the Government had agreed to give a Reception and that Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, would receive the Congress on their behalf.

The greatest step of all had now to be taken. Would it be at all possible to obtain a message of encouragement from His Majesty the King. I went to see the King's Private Secretary at Buckingham Palace and set forth the nature of the Congress, and suggested that on the opening day the President of the Congress, H.H. the Gaekwar of Baroda, might send a message to His Majesty to which the King might be graciously pleased to make acknowledgment. After a few days the reply came that this procedure was approved.

We had at last received full recognition. It now only remained to make a few minor arrangements. The President and Council of the Royal Geographical Society gave their consent to my entertaining members of the Congress to tea in the garden of the Society. Dowager Lady Swaythling most kindly agreed to give an evening Reception to some members. Miss Storey had the outside of 17, Bedford Square painted, the interior filled with flowers and the garden with shrubs. Mr. and Mrs. Jackman (not Mr. Jackman, the Secretary) kindly vacated the ground floor so that that also might be available. Mrs. B. T. Coote organised a corps of stewards for the Sessions. Mr. Jackman made arrangements for luncheons and teas in the basement of University College. Miss Beatrix Holmes arranged for a book-stall. Miss Sharples had a Programme and Who's Who of the Congress prepared. Mr. Richter saw to the printing and distribution of the addresses. Mr. Martin Shaw advised us about the music at the Queen's Hall. And Dr. Kolisko

arranged for the religious services to be given daily before the Sessions commenced.

By the beginning of July all arrangements had been completed. I had given my address from the B.B.C. The exciting moment was approaching when the speakers themselves would be arriving—speakers who hitherto had only been names to us but who would now be here in person. The long preparations were over. No doubt we had made mistakes. No doubt we had left much undone which we ought to have done. But we had done as nearly our best as we frail human beings can manage, and we eagerly awaited the result.

## CHAPTER FOUR



### DAYS OF WELCOME

OF THOSE WHO WERE COMING FROM ABROAD TO THE Congress the most important was, of course, the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, who was President both of the Chicago Congress and this London Congress and who had contributed most generously to its support. The Maharaja is a much travelled man with great width of view. Owing to his health he has to leave Baroda during the hot weather, so for some years now he has been spending his summers in France, Germany and this country ; and occasionally in America. For 62 years he has ruled Baroda and always with marked sympathy towards his subjects of other religions than his own, which is Hinduism. I had known His Highness for many years—in fact I had been in Baroda 54 years ago and I had received much kindness from him, for he is a man of great geniality of character and very faithful to any friendship he has once made. Owing to debility, he told me a day or two before the Congress commenced, he would be unable to attend the Congress often, but he would make every effort to be present for a short time at the opening meeting and deliver his address in person.

On the afternoon of the great day on which the Congress was to open we assembled in the rooms at 17, Bedford Square, which had been tastefully arranged for the reception of members. To the front they looked out on the green trees of the garden of the Square, and at the back they opened on to a garden made beautiful with pots of flowers and shrubs. We might well have been

in a country village. Miss Storey, Miss Sharples, Miss Holmes, Mrs. Coote were all ready to receive our guests and all of us were anxious to see them in the flesh.

A most notable figure among the arrivals was Sir Radhakrishnan. He was not unknown in England, for he had already lectured here. But he was new to most members of the Congress. He exactly filled the part, an aristocrat of aristocrats among the intellectually spiritual Hindus, tall, thin, ascetic-looking, and giving the impression of being deep and penetrating rather than broad and all-embracing, though in actual fact his depth gave him breadth and his sensitive nature made him exceedingly receptive to everything of value.

Quite different was Suzuki, the Japanese Buddhist. He, too, had depth, but he was smiling and welcoming from the start. Very quiet and self-contained, small and neat and graceful both in speech and action.

Of yet another type was the son of Sheikh El Maraghi. He was a Muslim and his height and long flowing robes and turban gave him great dignity. But he was also very cheerful and evidently meant to enjoy himself at the Congress before he commenced his studies at London University. Then came a striking figure—a young monk from Bengal. Perhaps of all at the Congress he was the most earnest and intensely spiritual. A public Congress in a strange land may not have been the most suitable place for the expression of what was in him. Nevertheless, we at once recognised in him a man who had given his whole self to what Hindus call the realisation of God. He wore Indian robes and a remarkable yellow puggree inscribed with Sanskrit texts, was small in stature and had a smiling, sensitive face. And I could well believe that one day he would rise to high spiritual eminence.

These were the more noticeable among the new



arrivals ; but our thoughts were naturally turned to the meeting at the Queen's Hall that evening which would actually open the Congress. We had employed " sandwich " men to parade the streets in the vicinity for the last few days and had placed small advertisements in the papers. But what would be the result, who could say ? At one moment I would see a vision of vast crowds attracted by the glamour of so unusual and so varied an assembly of talent from all over the world. Londoners go in thousands to third-rate stuff at cinemas, so why should they not come with equal eagerness to hear something really worth listening to ? At other times my worst nature would get the better of me. I would lose faith in the good sense of the British Public and my mind would see a picture of a hall of immense empty spaces.

And this last picture was very nearly the true one. The platform was beautifully decorated with shrubs chosen by Mr. St. Barbe Baker, founder of the Men of the Trees. A choir of 150 to be conducted by Dr. Brockless were arranged under the organ. The procession of speakers was formed—the Chairman, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, the Maharaja Gaekwar in beautiful Indian dress, Ishbel, Marchioness of Aberdeen, Dr. Suzuki in Japanese dress, Mr. Hsiung in Chinese dress, Lord Allen of Hurtwood, and Sir Herbert Samuel. But as I followed in the rear and glanced at the Hall, I was horrified to find that nearly all the front seats in the body of the hall were empty, that in the Dress Circle there were only about a dozen persons, and that the only full part of the hall was the gallery, which was free. It was a chilly beginning. The situation was saved by Dame Elizabeth Cadbury. She called upon those behind to come up to the front seats, and so gave a fuller and more cheerful appearance to the Hall. She then announced a

minute's silence for prayer and concentration on the great object before us. Then the hymn "All people that on Earth do dwell" was sung by the fine choir and at the close Dame Elizabeth delivered her encouraging address.

If we believers in an over-ruling God, under whatever name we might speak of Him, she said, could meet together and find some basis of unity, we ought to make a real contribution to world peace. Differences there might be; but if we met together in the right spirit those differences would not hinder; possibly they might help. Long ago the great King of India, Asoka, had declared that what men wanted was a love of service one to another. Later, the Apostle Paul had exhorted the Athenians to be "kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one another." Now we should take Asoka and Paul and put them together. Then we might be able to herald the advent of the Kingdom of God—coming with peace and goodwill to all nations.

At the close of the Chairman's speech the Maharaja rose and announced that he had a message from His Majesty the King. It was as follows:

"I am much gratified to receive the message which your Highness sent me on behalf of those attending the World Congress of Faiths. Please express to them my sincere thanks.

"I earnestly hope that the deliberations of the Congress may help to strengthen the spirit of peace and good-will on which the well-being of mankind depends."

While His Highness read the message the whole audience stood and at its close all sang the National Anthem.

We were especially glad to receive the second paragraph of the message. It might well have ended at the first. But in the second His Majesty graciously identified himself with our efforts and recognised their world-wide importance.

The Maharaja Gaekwar then spoke. He said that looking back through a long life he had never seen a greater need for good-will, understanding, and co-operation in all our relationships. Yet in spite of all the evil abroad he remained an optimist and a firm believer that good must ultimately triumph over evil. In the brotherhood of man lay the salvation of the world. The cumulative effect of world-wide good-will would be irresistible.

Our need, he continued, is to return to simpler beliefs, common to all religions, and base on them a fellowship of faiths wherein there is not only toleration but co-operation for the good of humanity. It is not to a new religion that mankind should be urged to turn, but to a consideration of the fundamental beliefs which are common to all religion. The long and peaceful reign of Asoka was a glorious and abiding testimony to the security in peace and good-will which can be gained without resort to force. The earlier and simpler truths have become obscured by rites and rituals. We can still, however, distinguish a variable and an invariable part in religion. And the invariable part consists in uniting the adherents of all faiths in ties of fellowship and friendship, and in common acceptance of those truths which are fundamental and ageless and transcend the confines of the narrow nationalism and international selfishness that are the bane of modern times.

The Maharaja would have us take the best from all religions and base on their fundamental truths a creed of

selfless service to humanity. The difficulties are many and the way long ; but if the inherent good-will and commonsense in man are brought to bear upon our problems, the world will find peace again in the wider vision of good and the brotherhood of man. Civilisation to-day is blindly groping. Let us try to give it direction and restore its wavering faith.

His Highness was warmly applauded when he sat down. The audience recognised the authority of the pronouncement. Coming from a man of his eminence and experience, it really struck home.

Then followed Lord Allen, looking frail and ill yet quite evidently with an unquenchable fire burning within him—the fire of the highest ideal to which he was fearlessly, almost recklessly, giving his life. The Congress, he said, was meeting at a most important moment in the history of the world. In Geneva there was assembled a Congress of Doubt. Here in London there was a Congress of Faith. He welcomed the Congress in the name of the millions of ordinary human beings in all the countries of the world in whose hearts there had never burned a more real faith, but whose minds were bewildered because of the absence of opportunity to translate into practice the faith that was in them. In the network of theology, he went on, we have lost our faith. We now need a simpler religion which, in this age of science, could be made common to all peoples. “Do unto others as you would they should do unto you”,—that is the simple religion needed. A religion of compassion. And the ordinary men and women who go to make up the nations of our time have that faith. He hoped the Congress might be the means of calling it out.

Lord Allen's inspiring speech was followed by the

singing of that great hymn "God is working His purpose out", ending with the two lines :

" Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters  
cover the sea."

I may say that all the hymns at this and the three other Queen's Hall meetings had been chosen with a view to all, of whatever religion, being able to join in them. And the singing of a great hymn by an audience led by a fine choir serves to give people the sense of taking their share in the proceedings and of being something more than mere listeners. It also gives a welcome relief from the strain of concentrating attention.

After the singing of the hymn the Dowager Lady Aberdeen, the veteran leader of women's causes, spoke. Looking, if I may so express it, most queen-motherly, she welcomed the Congress as President of the International Council of Women and as representing forty millions of women belonging to all races, all nations, all classes, and all faiths linked together to promote and practice the golden rule of doing unto others as they would others should do unto them. The freedom which had been given to women of recent years had released a great world power. " You have the women of the world at the back of you in this, your Holy Quest," concluded Lady Aberdeen, " and may God bless your visit."

The manner quite as much as the matter of the graceful little speech aroused much enthusiasm. And this note was carried on by Suzuki, who in a different way had no less grace. He said that all religions rested on the recognition of One Supreme Authority which governed the destiny of the universe itself. And he added the profound truth which was realised more as the Congress

proceeded, that meetings of this kind were conducive to a deeper penetration into one's own religious beliefs and brought clarification to each: when that was attained, World Fellowship would become realisable not only among religions themselves, but in all fields of human activity. Differences there might be, but they could remain. When we had a clear recognition of the One Supreme Authority, we should surely come to respect It in a far deeper sense than ever before. We must all hope. Realisation of our hope would lead us on to the glorification of the Supreme Authority, and in this there would be an eternal possibility of World Fellowship. What that hope was, and what that Authority, would become clearer as the Congress proceeded.

Mr. Hsiung, also responding to Lady Aberdeen's welcome, told the meeting that on the top of a mountain in China are temples to different faiths—a temple of Confucius, a temple of Buddha and so on. The mountain is steep and pilgrims are carried in chairs, the carriers being Muslims. On the way up are huts erected by Christians, who tell pilgrims that they are going to worship false gods and will therefore go to hell instead of heaven. The moral Mr. Hsiung drew was that it was better to expose our prejudices than keep them in the dark corners of our hearts. And at this Congress we were going to do more: we would expose the most beautiful corners of our hearts.

Sir Herbert Samuel then summed up the aims and intentions of the Congress. He drew attention to the fact that each of the two dictators who now in Europe control the destinies of millions of men and women, inculcated the doctrine that not merely was war inevitable but that it was also undesirable that it should disappear

from among the institutions of mankind, for the reason that it braced national energies and evoked heroic features. This sinister philosophy we must oppose and overthrow. We must mobilise the moral opinion of the whole world. Religion, the speaker contended, has always been the most powerful force in the ordering of human affairs. But at present religions do not grip. We cannot see religion for the religions. To recover their old beneficent power over the minds of men, the Churches—all of them—must revive the presentation of their creeds and must eliminate the incredible. The Congress must impress upon them all the imminence of the great peril with which humanity is confronted and the urgent need for common action to meet a clear and common danger. There may be differences between the creeds as well as common objects. But we must not allow the differences to lead to mutual alienation. Rather should the common objects lead the creeds to march together. When the peril that faces mankind is an international peril, should not all the authorised creeds be urged to place the stress—the accent, that is, the vital thing in religion—upon international fellowship, upon relations of friendliness, peace, and good-will—upon that World Fellowship which is the purpose of the Congress? World-wide influences should be set to work which in time should permeate the soul of every nation. The will to peace must be universal to be effective. We must realise how wicked are the quarrels of States and the bloody massacres of war. We must strive to get into communion with that Something Else which is surely immanent in the universe, and turn to sanity, kindliness and peace.

The meeting ended with the singing of Clifford Bax's hymn commencing :

“Turn back, O man, foreswear thy foolish ways,”  
and ending

“Now, even now, once more from earth to sky,  
Peels forth in joy man’s old undaunted cry—  
Earth shall be fair, and all her folk be one.”

The emptiness of the Hall had made the beginning feel depressing. But at the end there was no doubt about the temper of both platform and audience. Both speakers and hearers had entered into the spirit of the Congress and had enjoyed the meeting. We went away feeling that we had made a good commencement. And when I expressed my disappointment to the kind Mr. Crane at the emptiness of the Hall, he said: “Never mind, the stuff was good: the rest will be all right.”

The next day, Saturday, I welcomed members of the Congress to a Garden Party at the Royal Geographical Society’s House, which used to be Lowther Lodge and to which some fine additions had been made. It was an ideal place for all to meet and mix and talk together. With the help of my old friend, Sir Frederick O’Connor, who had been my valued assistant on our Mission to Lhasa thirty-two years before, I received my guests in the Hall opening on to the garden. They passed on into the garden where tea was brought to them on little tables scattered over the lawn. It happened to be a fine day in what afterwards proved to be an exceptionally wet summer, and we were able to walk about and go from one table to another and make each other’s acquaintance. The conditions could not have been more favourable for the main purpose of the Congress: promoting the spirit of fellowship among followers of all faiths.

Next day we gathered for attendance at the usual afternoon service in St. Paul’s Cathedral. There was to



be no special service for the Congress. The intention was that all members who so desired, whatever might be their religion, should have an opportunity of attending the ordinary service of the Cathedral. But the admission of non-Christians did not pass without protest. At the entrance to the Cathedral—and even inside, until they were removed by vergers—were persons distributing pamphlets of protest indicating what undesirable persons we were to be admitted to a Christian place of worship. Even we Christian members were considered objectionable. The pamphlet had on the outside a cartoon portraying the Devil grinning with glee as he watched a procession of Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims ascending the steps of the Cathedral to be welcomed by the Dean, shown standing under the portico at the entrance.

This was the reception the Congress had outside the Cathedral. Inside the reception was very different. At the extreme west end of the Cathedral, immediately by the entrance, the Dean and the Archdeacon received us with great cordiality and I introduced some of the leading members. We were then led in a body by a verger up the main aisle to the seats which had been reserved for us in the front rows on the right hand side, immediately under the pulpit.

We Londoners are so accustomed to the sight of St. Paul's that we are apt to forget how impressive is the great Cathedral as we advance up the central aisle, emerging under the lofty dome with the oaken choir stalls and the magnificent altar in front of us in the distance. And on this Sunday everything was looking beautifully cared for. A people who could erect and care for such a noble edifice must have some regard for the high and holy things in life. This was the impression that I at any rate

received that Sunday, as I tried to put myself in the position of one seeing the great Cathedral for the first time.

The service was no less impressive than the stately building. First came the dignified procession of choir and clergy preceding the Dean and taking their appointed seats in the stalls. Then followed the solemn call to worship; the prayers with their wonderful phrasing; the exquisite singing of the anthem: "How lovely is Thy dwelling place"; the congregational singing of the hymn: "All people that on earth do dwell"; the sermon of downright Christianity preached from the noble pulpit; the benediction by the Dean delivered from the distant altar and ringing down the whole length of the aisles; the return procession of the choir and clergy, and the final "Amen" issuing from the side aisle in which they assemble and are dismissed—all most worthy of the sacred edifice.

After the service was over many members of the Congress stayed on to look round the Cathedral. They expressed to me great appreciation of what they had seen and heard. And I felt that a very valuable precedent had been set. A great step forward had been taken in the direction of a Fellowship of Faiths.

## CHAPTER FIVE



### AT WORK

THE PRELIMINARY WELCOMES WERE OVER AND WE NOW settled down to the main business of the Congress, which was the holding of twenty sessions where the papers that had already been printed were read and discussed. These sessions were held, morning and afternoon, in the Great Hall of University College. But each day before they began, in a quiet room at 17, Bedford Square, there was a small group meeting of those disposed to silent meditation. These meetings were conducted by Professor Mahendranath Sircar, who had made a special study of prayer and meditation and who acquainted the meeting with the Hindu methods.

Afterwards Dr. Kolisko arranged twenty-minute services conducted on one day by a Hindu, on another by a Buddhist, and on a third by a Christian, and so on. The Botanical Theatre in which these services were held, and which adjoins the Great Hall, ordinarily presents a most forbidding appearance. But it was now transformed into an attractive meeting-place. Long dark blue curtains borrowed from the Dramatic Society of the University were hung to hide the more repellant features of the platform's surroundings, and also to form a suitable background for the officiating Minister and the seat and lectern provided for him. A pair of silvered cardboard urns had been designed by the art member of our Executive Committee, Miss Holmes; and on the floor in front of the stage had been placed a handsome Persian carpet. So, as members of the congregation

took their places in the semicircular rows of seats rising in tiers from the level of the stage, they were saved from the unpleasant feeling of attending a course of scientific lectures with an examination in prospect at the end.

At the Great Hall itself Mrs. Coote and her corps of stewards were in charge—scrutinising entrance tickets, selling programmes or papers and showing people to their places. Mr. Jackman and I were always there to welcome the Chairman, speaker, and leader of debate, and to conduct them to the platform. These were not meetings open to the public. But we found, as interest in our proceedings grew, that it would be well to enlist temporary members and admit them to the gallery.

When the meetings were over members crowded round the stalls in the Entrance Hall, where books and pamphlets were on sale and information about the Congress was available. Cafeteria luncheons and teas were provided in the basement. And if members still had a desire for each other's society and for yet further discussion on the subject of the day, they could adjourn to 17, Bedford Square, where at five o'clock Miss Wrench arranged informal group meetings.

This was the ordinary routine and not, of course, very dissimilar from that followed by most Congresses. At the opening Session of the series on Monday morning, July 6th, we had hoped that the Maharaja Gaekwar would take the Chair; but His Highness was not well, so that honour devolved upon me. And we had purposely arranged that no one Chairman should preside through all the sessions of the Congress, but that each session should be presided over by a different Chairman. We wished to emphasise that variety which we considered so desirable; though, to preserve due continuity, I sat

behind the Chairman at every session and kept him informed of our procedure.

In my opening remarks I referred to Lord Allen's speech in the Queen's Hall, and said that we were, indeed, a Congress of Faith. We had faith in ourselves. And we had faith in ourselves because we had faith in the ultimate goodness of things. I had heard the hope expressed that debates would bring us down from our high flights to reality. I shared that hope. Yet I hoped we should not stop at the mere surface realities but should go deep down to the most fundamental reality, namely, the fellowship of all human beings with one another and with the world to which the whole of us belong and which we believe is ultimately governed for good. I urged that everyone who took part in the debates should feel the responsibility that was on him. While he might be absolutely frank in discussion and say out straight what was in his mind, yet he should also speak with the utmost courtesy and due regard for the feelings of others. We wanted to spread abroad in the world that spirit of fellowship which the world so much needed and which it was the business of the Congress to create.

Mr. Yusaf Ali, who was now to deliver the opening address, had been chosen for that purpose because he had been accustomed to living and working with men of all the chief faiths of the world. In his address, he emphasised the value of religion in counteracting evil and promoting fellowship. Ultimately the whole brunt of the fight against evil would have to be borne by religion. Nations were not yet ready to trust each other. While this distrust continued we could make no real progress either in disarmament, or the reduction of tariffs, or proper inter-communication between one country and another. And such human weaknesses as

fear, distrust, selfishness, jealousy and arrogance could never be eradicated by political institutions, however efficient they might be. Only religion could do this. And by religion Mr. Yusaf Ali meant that mode of looking at things which postulated the oneness of humanity, the ideals of peace, justice, and righteousness under the divine government of the world, and the responsibility of man to the voice of a God-given conscience. Therefore we ought to organise our spiritual forces and consciously co-operate with men who share this faith, however widely divergent their views might be on doctrinal matters. From his own experience he was sure that this was possible as between individuals. And after all, what were nations but groups of individuals? If men of goodwill could band themselves together, they could act as a leaven and influence large masses of humanity.

The speaker believed there was always latent in the human heart a spirit of sympathy, love, and service; and that where there was any mutual desire for peace and goodwill, the human heart responded in spite of differences in race, religion, or community. The Quranic teaching, he said, is that men are all framed according to one divine pattern by the handiwork of God. And if they wander away from that unity it must be restored through the true teaching. Beneath the main differences in points of view among the various denominations of Muslims there runs a general desire to cement the Brotherhood of Islam: Mr. Yusaf Ali would carry this principle further. About three-fourths of his fellow-citizens in India were Hindus. While adhering to his own religious ideas, he had found much in Hindu philosophy and poetry to admire. He had many personal friends among the Hindus and it had been a pleasure to work with them. They trusted each other and took a delight in each other's company. And

he would like to bring these respective groups to the same frame of mind. In China, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism lived side by side and were by no means mutually conclusive. Judaism and Christianity were sister religions to Islam. In an international atmosphere these three might well come together in fellowship and establish an understanding without either side giving up the beliefs which they considered fundamental.

Individually, many of us had actually felt and experienced the fellowship of faiths. Why, then, could we not bring it about on a larger scale and in a more organised way? We might not be able to see things in the same light, but we might tolerate and try to understand other points of view. The office of religion was to bind us together in the bonds of a common humanity. And there was nothing to prevent us, with all our differences, from realising a true sense of fellowship.

This address by Mr. Yusaf Ali was most cordially received by the Congress. It had struck exactly the right note, and from the Chair I could see the members eagerly responding to it. Now our big experiment was to begin. Discussion was to follow. How would it be conducted? The cynical had predicted that much heat would be engendered but very little light would glow from it. As leader of debates we had chosen a Christian and an ex-missionary. Would he regard the Muslim speaker as an hereditary enemy of Christianity or as a fellow-human-being, and like the rest of humanity instinct with the Divine? That the Rev. A. G. Fraser had now to show.

Just as Mr. Yusaf Ali had declared himself to be earnestly devoted to Islam, so Mr. Fraser spoke of his strong loyalty to Christianity. But he believed that religion ought to unite us. All the world over, he said,

men are seeking God and finding Him. And they find Him because He is yearning for them. Our sympathy with one another and our desire to get together springs from Him. What we want is to get down to the deep waters where there is peace ; and these deep waters are God Himself.

Mr. Fraser then went on to make his own Christian position clear : God is like Jesus ; and Jesus meant more to him in companionship and in the joy of life than anything else at all. The whole of his outlook in history, in politics, in living, was affected by this companionship. That was his position as a Christian. Yet he would not try to impose a change on other men. If he tried to proselytise, he antagonised. Imperialism in religion was quite as bad as land-grabbing in politics. Jesus Himself gave no excuse for proselytising. He did not try to upset the Judaism of his followers ; He lived as in a tent alongside with them. He gave the whole of His life to their conversion, and they found in Him such a life that they desired to know the secret of it.

Then followed a most important announcement by Mr. Fraser—a very courageous word, for it is likely to be much criticised in Church circles, but one which I personally regard as profoundly true. Speaking as one who had been a missionary and would be a missionary again, he believed that our business is not to convert but to contribute. We are trustees for Christ. And if we contribute we cause no resentment. We have no right to impose our views on other people. We ought to go back again to the example of Jesus, Who said : “ I am among you as he who serves,” and of Whom it was said : “ He went about doing good.” On that basis we are offending no-one and are always getting together.



The strong yet genial personality of Mr. Fraser gave force to these words, and they provided a valuable contribution to the cause of World Fellowship.

The debate, in accordance with the rules we had laid down for ourselves, was now open. Many desired to speak, but I first called upon the Hindu monk, known in the Congress as Brahmachari. I did so because he was different from the Indian University Professors. He represented that body of Hindus who, like the monks of Christianity, live a life entirely devoted to religion. He would not be entirely in his element in making a big speech at a public meeting; but in the more intimate atmosphere of the Sessions, and still more in the subsequent informal group meetings, we might catch something from him which a public speaker might be unable to convey—and something more valuable.

He urged that for thousands of years Indian philosophers had taught that religion is not an object of faith, or an hypothesis, or a belief: it is an object of experience. Every man has the capacity to experience that reality Whom we call God. And when we have experienced God, religion becomes real and vital in our lives. Then we can make use of the achievements of science, which are in no way contradictory to that experience. All the discords caused by proselytising other people have no real significance, because religion is an experience. In every step forward we take in life we gain a sense of infinity, of God. The more we make this sense paramount in our lives the nearer we approach God, till the idea of "faith" becomes meaningless: we have had actual personal experience of God.

The Brahmachari concluded by urging the importance of this aspect of religion—of all religions. By emphasising it a harmonious synthesis of all religions could be

brought about and we could make a better use of scientific results.

The next speaker was of a very different type from the gentle Hindu monk. He was a young, vigorous, confident Canadian of Dutch origin, Mr. John Ryswyk. It did his heart good, he said, to find that some people understood that religion had nothing to do with Christianity, Islam, or any other special religion. Religion, he maintained, is a thing of the soul, and the soul cannot be harnessed by a sect. Why is it that men and women do not understand one another? It is because they believe, but do not *know*. Jesus knew, Mahomed knew, Zoroaster knew. And because all these men knew, they were able to give the world a lasting monument—Christhood—as Jesus did.

After the Canadian speaker we returned to India, and Pundit Rishiram, an Arya Samajist, urged that if we wanted to bring about a real fellowship of faiths we should have more loyalty to ideals than to personalities. No single personality could convey reality to the whole world; there would be differences. "But when I come to my true spirit," said the Pundit, "I find that its real nature is to love others, to be sympathetic, and to be charitable . . . and when I go against these virtues I am false to my true nature." The reason why there is so much conflict is that there are organised religions and Churches, and everybody is trying to bring the largest number he can into one fold, on to one level. What men should do is to take goodness, charity and fellow-feeling to people, irrespective of whether those people will join their particular fold. If men would do that there would be a greater fellowship.

After the Pundit came Harjivandas Kalidas Mehta, who made the important point that he who knew his own

religion knew the religion of his fellows ; and he who condemned the religion of his fellows did not know his own religion. If we believe in the fatherhood of God we must respect our God wherever people meet in His name, whether in church, or mosque, or wherever it might be. If we cease to do that we do not understand our own religion. In order to bring about a fellowship of faiths we must first try to understand our own religion. We remember the great men, but forget their greatness. That creates the trouble. If we remember the greatness in great men we shall not quarrel in the name of religion. And if we want to bring about the brotherhood of faiths, we should try to see the One in the many, not the many in the One. This man will speak in the name of Lord Buddha, that man in the name of the Lord Jesus, and so on. Each thinks that his is the only Saviour of the world. But if we try to see that there is one life and that all serve that great life, there will be no quarrels : all men and women will become objects of reverence. Lastly, all churches of all religions should be universal, not national. God should be made international.

So ended the first Session. There had been perfect evenness of temper throughout and some valuable points had been made. When the meeting was over we all trooped off to the Entrance Hall and garden, discussing points and personalities, progress made and future possibilities. Then most of us adjourned to luncheon in the basement and afterwards got things in train for the next Session at 2.30. At this the address to be delivered was by Dr. Suzuki who, as already stated, is Professor of Buddhist Philosophy at Otani University, Kyoto, and is possessed of an exceptionally attractive personality.

Sir Denison Ross presided with his usual genial urbanity, and, being so well known in all Oriental

countries, his presence gave authority and prestige to the Chair. In his introductory remarks he said that what drew men together was not what they believed, but the fact that they did believe. This drew men together in a way that even the feeling of nationality did not draw them. There was a great deal that nationality did not mean that religion did mean. And we were passing through a curious phase in world history where religion was suddenly having a meaning that it never had before. Men were coming together more. This was a sign of what religion meant to men, and what it should mean. Irrespective of what the creed was, religion should bring men of different creeds together in a fellowship of men.

What now had Suzuki to say? He had come the whole long way from Japan on purpose to join this Congress. What was the message he had to deliver? In the main it was pessimistic and would have been depressing but for the charm of his personality and for a ray of hope which was shot through the gloom: Egotism of a fierce kind, tending to exclusiveness at all costs, is being practically demonstrated all over the world. And the saddest thing of all is that we are helpless to check its reckless progress towards an inevitable end. Such is Suzuki's view. And we have perhaps, he added, to submit to the logical working of our own karma, which we have been accumulating throughout the beginningless past. At present no nation is willing to have a world religious conference, and this only shows that our karma-hindrance still weighs heavily on us.

This would be a gloomy outlook if Suzuki had not inserted that little word "perhaps," and if he had not also suggested that though we cannot stem the tide even when we know where it is finally ending, we can at least

“preserve a little corner somewhere on earth, east or west, where our faiths can be safely guarded from utter destruction.” All the large-hearted Bodhisattvas in the world, he said, should get together, use their moral influence to the utmost, and keep their spiritual fire, however solitary it might be, burning at its intensest. Then, when the turmoil was over, they might seek the little corner they had saved and endeavour to work for universal enlightenment.

So, in spite of the pessimistic view which Suzuki takes of the present state of the world, he does not counsel inaction and placid submission to fate. He maintains that the Buddhist way of solving the problem of life is a positive one. Buddhism, he says, accepts life as it is, faces its dualism, its evils, its struggles and pains. It asks us to gain an insight into that which underlies all forms of dualism, and not to regard them as irreducibly final. But what does underlie the one and the many—you and me—is a little difficult to understand from Suzuki. Buddhism designates it as *Sūnyatā*, which Suzuki translates as Emptiness. All opposites rise from it, sink into it, exist in it. It is not the Absolute as usually understood. Nor is it God, for it is not personal. And it is not impersonal. It must not be conceived of as atheistical, or pantheistical, or acosmistical. Yet Suzuki speaks of the notion of *Sūnyatā* as a mediating notion. Insight into it dispels ignorance and brings enlightenment, illuminating life itself. All that makes up life is cleansed of every taint. Love shines in its true light. Differences, though recognised and accepted, cease to be the condition of antagonistic feelings. And fellowship, the ideal of Bodhisattvahood, becomes an actuality.

But Suzuki insists that spiritual fellowship must be



*Art Photo Service*

PROFESSOR MALALASEKARA

*Buddhist*



closely related to material fellowship and that the material aspect of life has been greatly neglected by religion in the past. Spirit and matter are, in his view, so intimately related that the one cannot go without the other, and it is in matter as well as in spirit that we feel fellowship and mutuality. Matter is a world common to us all. It is over matter that we exercise our spiritual power and through it feel our own existence. Matter resists our approach, and by this we grow conscious of ourselves, that is, of our own spirituality. In this respect matter is our friend, not our enemy. And the resistance it offers helps us to grow in spiritual power. From the Buddhist point of view it is not right to divide matter from spirit or spirit from matter. Finally, love (karuna) is the moving principle of all forms of fellowship. The six virtues of Charity, Morality, Humility, Virility, Meditation, and Wisdom are recommended. And to achieve the end of a world fellowship of faiths there must be free communication of all kinds among religiously-aspiring people of different nations. Institutes for the understanding of different religions must be established; religious representatives must be exchanged, as ambassadors are exchanged; and a religious parliament to consider the various means of attaining peace must be summoned.

To lead the discussion on Dr. Suzuki's paper we had chosen a young English member of the Buddhist Society, Mr. Alan Watts, author of *Outline of Zen Buddhism*. He said that in the West there is an impression that Buddhism is a negative way of life and advocates escaping from the alternating joys and sorrows of life into the monotony of everlasting peace where all opposites are merged in a colourless disillusion. Dr. Suzuki's address was of exceptional importance in showing that Buddhism in its



most essential form is not an escapist philosophy of this kind, but that it accepts life as it is, faces its dualism, its evils, its struggles, and advises us *not* to escape from the world. To him the Middle Way of Buddhism is not a mere compromise of extremes—no lukewarmness: it is a third concept mediating between pairs of opposites, which is not so much between as beyond extremes.

Then Mr. Alan Watts, through the analogy of music, further elucidated Suzuki's point: Life is a flowing process of constantly changing forms, a complex arrangement of harmonies and discords, of birth and death, of individual notes and phrases which make up a melody. But these individual notes do not sound for ever. They change unceasingly. And that is exactly what Buddhism says about life. It advocates what Suzuki referred to as unity in diversity and diversity in unity—a principle underlying life and music alike.

Taking a general world-view, Mr. Watts said that we want neither one world religion nor yet a host of unrelated religions. We want a symphony of different religions, having regard for an essential relationship between them. He added that this Congress was the first which had truly conceived such an order and as that was the order upon which all life was based, our efforts had an unusually good chance of success. Certainly the Buddhist world would give it a welcome, for Buddhism is in itself already a minor fellowship of faiths. In a time when uniformity is being increasingly mistaken for order, our most urgent necessity is the ideal of catholicity, of bringing many different things into harmonious unity without detracting in any way from their uniqueness. It is, he said, lack of respect for other people's opinions and the wish to make others conform

to one's own, which is at the root of all conflict. Unity is not achieved by deciding to abolish all differences, but by agreeing to differ.

Mr. Payne, another English Buddhist, pointed out that Buddhism, in showing how love springs up, has no antagonism to Christianity. It is the essence of all religions. All are founded on Love, Sympathy, Equanimity, and a determination to co-operate for the destruction of evil in any shape or form.

The Brahmachari said that some Hindus advocated escape by running into the forest ; advocated doing everything in a disinterested way. But a third way was to do everything for God. Give yourself, forget yourself. Then you do all things, you enjoy all things, but there is no karma. God says to His disciple : "First dedicate yourself to Me and you will be with Me always." That, said the Brahmachari, was the school to which he belonged.

Dr. Suzuki, in reply to the discussion, said that mere talking did not do much good. But coming together did a great deal. "Your seeing my face, and my seeing yours—that does good. Arrangements must be made so that we could assemble wherever and whenever we wanted. Unless we can do this," he ended, "World Fellowship is nothing but talking."

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That finished the two Sessions. But this first day was a heavy day, for we were also to hold a Public Meeting in the Queen's Hall ; so we could not have the informal group discussion on the day's results for which we had arranged on other days. The two Sessions had been well attended by a keenly interested audience, and the discussions had been carried on without acrimony.

They had served a useful purpose in setting a tone for the rest of the Congress.

On the following morning the address delivered was again by a Buddhist—Professor Malalasekara of Ceylon. Dr. Maxwell Garnett, Secretary-General of the League of Nations Union, was in the Chair. He said that in the Congress it would be the positive and constructive work that would loom larger than the passive business of keeping order. We want to develop loyalty to the whole. Not less patriotism but more world-loyalty. Only if we can develop loyalty of that kind shall we accomplish the task which we Christians call building the Kingdom of God upon earth, but which is one in which the adherents of all religions represented are equally engaged.

Professor Malalasekara reminded us in his address that it was exactly on July 3rd (the date of the opening of the Congress) 2525 years ago that the Buddha preached his first sermon. And he himself was but the last and greatest of successive generations of Aryan saints, sages, and philosophers. He taught, firstly, that all life is inextricably and inalienably involved in suffering ; secondly that whatever phenomenon appears, it is invariably an effect produced by an antecedent cause, and is, in its turn, the cause of a subsequent effect, so that if we could eliminate the cause of suffering it would cease ; thirdly, that desire for what we wrongly consider happiness—that is to say, selfishness—being the cause of suffering, it must be cast out till there comes Peace Ineffable—Nirvana ; fourthly, that the way to the fulfilment of life is through Right Understanding, Right Words, Right Acts, Right Mode of Life, Right Effort, Right Recol-

lectedness, and Right Spiritual Attainment. Buddha regarded evil not as a thing to be atoned for, but to be outlived, to be outgrown. It might even be a necessity for growth.

The basic principles of this religion, Malalasekara contended, are such as would allow its adherents to take an active and effective part in the proposed World Fellowship ; in fact, such a Fellowship follows as a necessary corollary to its teaching of the fundamental unity of life. Only by a fellowship of men can the modern world be saved. And the best way of securing such a fellowship is through religion, for religion is solely concerned with humanity. Real religion, indeed, does not go beyond the human sphere as its goal, said the Professor. Salvation is obtained not elsewhere, in some other sphere, but in this world, as human beings. This view was afterwards described as different from what the Buddha himself preached. But Malalasekara was evidently giving his own interpretation, and he went on to elaborate his views : For the moment hatred has contrived to make itself stronger than love. So love must be organised. It must be built up on the unselfishness, compassion, and boundless capacity for self-sacrifice which experience has shown is inherent in man. It must have its roots in the spiritual oneness of humanity. With the suppression of evil must proceed the encouragement of the good. What is wanted is the "heart" that shall make it impossible for men to resort to violence. The only peace that is worth having is the contentment of mind which comes from the satisfaction of its highest aspirations and deepest needs. And this comes only through holiness which is the essence of religion. Finally, if we would promote World-Fellowship we must first cultivate fellowship among ourselves. The followers

of the various religions must learn to respect and revere each other. It is by the discovery of the affinities of his own nature that man is to be brought into fellowship with man. The Buddha himself had spoken of fellowship. He envisaged a world where all beings lived in infinite fellowship, "not deceiving each other, not despising anybody, anywhere, never in anger wishing anyone to suffer, through body, speech, or thought. Like a mother maintaining her only son with her life, keep thy immeasurable loving thought for all creatures."

Mrs. Rhys Davids, the great scholar of Buddhism and the widow of Dr. Rhys Davids, who had done more than anyone to introduce a knowledge of Buddhism into England, led the discussion. She submitted that the speaker could have presented a stronger case for Buddhism if he had expounded the primitive and original Buddhism. She contended that the notion that *desire* was the cause of suffering and should therefore be destroyed, was a misconception of Buddhism. For a man to be worth anything, she said, he must have desire. Only in desiring, only in willing, do we grow in religion and come to be what we were not before.

She also criticised the paper on the ground that it gave the impression that religion was solely concerned with humanity—with life on this earth; whereas in her view the original Buddhism preached a quest, a thirst, not for extinction or passive peace, but for that highest, inconceivable consummation which is not possible on earth. Man's quest was not an Utopia here among men, but a wayfaring, life after life, that we may at last reach the Highest. First it was by good living that man wayfared further; then it was by seeing in every man that same "lamp within", and so treating him with tenderness, loving thereby the Divine Self in the fellow-man.

When Buddhism in general came to welcome these, its oldest ideas and teachings, it would indeed be one with the great fellowship of faiths.

Pundit Lalan said that he was born in Jainism, but had studied Buddhism, and was still a follower of Buddhism because Buddhism is a follower of Jainism. Religion unites souls, while nations unite bodies. If we see the world from the soul, it is a beautiful world. It is full of concord and happiness. There is a "supreme felicity" which is the highest happiness. Religion is the way to it.

In reply to doubts which had been expressed by Mr. Frank Hirst as to the teaching of Buddhism in regard to the Supreme, Professor Malalasekara said that Buddhism did not acknowledge a supreme intelligence. When man finds perfection, it is the perfection of his own self through his own efforts. In reply to a direct question whether he accepted an intelligence greater than human intelligence, he said that there is an intelligence greater than our own, but that it does not exist outside; it exists in human beings, or in beings who have attained development in some other sphere.

## CHAPTER SIX



### THE CHRISTIAN VIEW (Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic)

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HOW TO PROMOTE THE SPIRIT of world fellowship and establish spiritual unity among mankind as a whole was expounded by M. Berdiaeff in an address to which one instinctively applied the term masterly. It was all the more impressive because we were conscious that he spoke as one who had known the pains of persecution and exile. Moreover, he did not speak as one who would compel all others to come within the fold of his own Greek Orthodox Church, or even of any Christian Church: though he was convinced that, in the end, the spirit of Jesus would penetrate the souls of men throughout the world. Yet he insisted that before Christianity could unite mankind, it must itself become more spiritualised and more humanised. And by humanisation he did not mean the reduction of Christianity to mere humanism. He meant the recognition of the divine in man—of God-humanity—of the value of man as a human person who should not be treated as only a means or chattel. This spiritualisation of Christianity also implied, in his opinion, that it should not turn away from the world, but become the defender of man when he was rejected by the world.

This was M. Berdiaeff's main contention. But he recognised that mankind was still very far from spiritual brotherhood and spiritual unity, owing to the predominance of religious exclusivism and religious isolation. On the other hand he also observed that by reason

of the polarity of human nature, the dissension and hatred in the world had aroused movements making for closer contacts and unity. International intellectual congresses were held each year. The League of Nations tended towards unity in politics. A similar tendency was felt in religious life though it was not yet embodied in an institution, for there were many obstacles in the way of even Christian unity, and these difficulties increased still more when it came to brotherly relations between all religions and all men, independently of their creed, race, nationality or social standing.

Referring especially to Christianity, he said that the law concerning loving one's neighbour had been construed by each member of a given denomination as referring especially to his co-religionist. But it should not be thus limited : it should apply to all men. Christ, says Berdiaeff, is with all men : He is even with those who do not consider themselves Christians. Indeed, the universality of Christianity should be infinitely greater than that on which the Catholic and all other Churches pride themselves. Christians might well recognise that the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Jew, the Muslim, and the free-thinking spiritualist, if they strive after God, the spiritual life, truth, and goodness, belong to the Church of Christ, to its God. And they may be much more spiritual, much nearer God and Christ than the outward adepts of Christianity. Christ is also with those who are not with Him. Genuine spirituality goes beyond the narrow boundaries of Christian denominations. As regards other religions, Christianity does not deny that there is a quantum of truth in all religions or a sincere attitude towards God : it simply believes that it possesses a larger share of this truth. If, from the Christian point of view, Hindu spirituality is restricted



in its insufficient divulcation of the person, we must yet admit, says M. Berdiaeff, that it has a very remarkable elevation of thought.

On what basis, then, can the union of men of all denominations be attained? To that question M. Berdiaeff makes this reply : Unity includes in the union all individual grades of being. And this, far from impoverishing the union, really enriches it. A union of religions based on a minimum, such as faith in God, is the wrong kind of union. What we must strive after is fulness, not a minimum. The brotherly attitude of Christians towards the representatives of other religions should not be determined by such a minimum, but by the fact that the fulness of their faith demands that they should love all men because they bear the divine image and because Christ came for all of them. And particularly near must be those who have a genuine spiritual life, a real aspiration towards God and the divine. This unity and brotherhood of men, preserving individual richness and the fulness of faith and spiritual life, is perfectly practicable. In spite of dissensions mankind is advancing towards unity. Everything is becoming universal, though this process of unification is, unfortunately, not yet endowed with a spiritual character. Therefore it is that the religions, and particularly Christianity, should struggle for the brotherhood of man, for the unity of mankind. Intellectual doctrines and religious creeds alone will not achieve this spiritual understanding and union of mankind. It must arise as an outcome of real spiritual experience ; the genuine experience of brotherhood and charity.

Rev. Wilton Rix said that the materialist philosophy would in the end have to come to this, that man was as much a chattel to be organised as a load of timber. And

against this man would in the long run rebel, because it was depriving him of his ultimate true dignity, namely, that he bore the image of the Eternal. We should have to recognise that the Faiths throughout the world were the true guardians of the dignity of man.

Dr. Adolf Keller, of Geneva, the well-known General-Secretary of the European Office for Inter-Church Aid, said that the other, the totally different one, whom we combat or repudiate is, in reality, the other one in ourselves. M. Berdiaeff had spoken of polarity. Polarity, said Dr. Keller, is a whole which is not uniform but is able to combine opposites. Polarity is a unity of opposites.

Professor S. N. Das Gupta took objection to M. Berdiaeff's reference to Hinduism. It was very patronising, he thought. The speaker had said that Hinduism had not an adequate conception of the person, though it had much elevated thought, and that the conception of the Incarnation was found only in Christianity. Professor Das Gupta pointed out that from the time of the Vedas it had been recognised that the personality of the Most High was in all of us. "The great God is in all the rivers and all the mountains, and has encompassed within Himself the whole of humanity." In the Upanishads there was the same conception that man is but a spark from the Divine. The doctrine of incarnation was a crucial doctrine in Indian philosophy : God is born in man, and it is through man that God is revealed.

To this M. Berdiaeff replied that the Hindu conception of incarnation was that the Divine Presence is in all—in clouds, in trees, in stones, and in persons. That was not incarnation as an historical event : not incarnation in one personality. It was incarnation as a cosmic reality, and consequently could be repeated for ever.

Perhaps M. Berdiaeff's position will be the clearer if I record here what he said in an interpolation in the course of his address. He there said that all religions are one, but insisted nevertheless on the great difference between the Christian and all other religions : Man is the central mystery in the Christian religion, whereas he is not in any others. In this way the Christian religion believes in the incarnation of God. God has become man so that man may, in his turn, become divine.

At another Session Professor Louis Massignon, General Secretary of the Institut des Études Islamiques at the Sorbonne, was to have delivered an address on "Love—the Basis of Fellowship," but at the last moment was unable to leave Paris and therefore sent a *précis* of what he had intended to say. This was read and explained by M. Saurat, who also favoured the Congress with so illuminating a description of M. Massignon that we almost felt that we had gained rather than lost by M. Massignon's absence.

M. Saurat first described what M. Massignon's intellectual evolution had been, for that evolution was a lesson in the purpose of the Congress, namely, how to reach world fellowship through religion. Massignon had begun well, as most Frenchmen do begin, he said, as a complete non-believer trained in the eighteenth century academic tradition. To this tradition had been added nineteenth century science. Thus Massignon began as a non-believer trained in most scientific methods—scientific, that is to say, on the philosophical and historical side.

Soon he became one of the greatest authorities the world has seen on Islamic matters, and then entered a

second phase. He lived among Muslims. He became very friendly with many of them and was extremely intimate with a few who had reached the highest degree of spirituality. In this way he had a direct intuition of what the great soul in Islam could be. The first result was a softening of his intellectual hardness, a breakdown of that stiff and steely tradition in which he had been brought up. He came to see that in order to live you must have faith. It is not enough to know. Even to understand is not enough. You must believe.

Did he then become a convert to Islam? Not at all. His own school, his own belief came up. The contact with Islam made his own ancient Catholic feeling stir within himself and revived the belief in the Roman Catholic tradition. This M. Saurat thought to be deeply human and natural. It was, he said, in accord with another trait in the French tradition. The real master of whom all Frenchmen are proud is Descartes. And on this subject of religion he had made two discoveries : firstly, that one must belong to the religion of one's own country, and secondly, that thought is governed by will and not by thought. At every point of our intellectual life we make a decision. And the will comes into the decision. The will influences reason and the intellect and feeling as well. What is faith except the incidence of the deepest will in man on both his feelings and his intellect? Ultimately we live by faith—by the fact that we have decided that this shall be the truth by which we shall guide our lives. Therefore Massignon's conversion to Roman Catholicism was in one of the truest French traditions, and he is a fine example of a man who attains to his own faith through contact with another faith.

What, then, has Massignon to say on the problem of how fellowship with others can be attained by those who

have a definite concrete belief like the Roman Catholic belief? How is the dogmatist to look on those who do not believe in that dogma? Massignon's answer is the Christian one—the answer of Love—though M. Saurat would have preferred what he considers the much nobler and finer word, Charity.

Massignon sees that world-fellowship cannot be attained by cutting away from each creed what gives it its originality. None of us wish to suppress anything in others. Therefore positive dogmas must not be suppressed. On the contrary, they must be developed to their fullest extent, though when developed they will be judged—judged by God at the last Judgment, and in between, judged by the ordinary man in the street, by the man who is not necessarily a believer. The two elements of the judgment will be love and action. What we have to do is to trust in God, be what we are, do our best where God has put us, and leave the rest to Him.

As regards Islam, he sees it as something which came after Christianity had been established and it had been discovered that Christianity was not for all the races. Then Mahomed came and appealed to the races that were not Christian, so as to bring them into some community with those that were. This is his view of the mission of Islam. How will it be accomplished? A Muslim has to act according to his law as to belief in his own dogmas. The Christian has to do the same as regards *his* dogmas. They must love each other just as we must love the weaker brethren. The Christian will think the Muslim, and the Muslim will think the Christian the weaker. The decision which is right will lie with God. Therefore it is the duty of each one of us to have charity for those who do not know the full truth. Massignon may

know that he has the truth and that the others are in error. All that he demands from the others is that they shall have the same charity towards him that he is prepared to have for them. Let each develop his own dogma, always keeping the principal of charity as the essence of his actions. Whatever you may think of your misguided brother, be kind to him. Then he who thinks that you are in the wrong must similarly be kind to you. Both must remember they are under the judgment of God. The test of the judgment is the quantity of compassion, love and charity shown in action. Those who were in error will be judged more lightly than those who knew the truth. The Roman Catholic, in Massignon's view, will be judged most severely of all because he, knowing the truth, has no excuse for falling into error. The further men are from the truth, the more lenient will be the judgment. And Massignon maintains that this attitude is fundamentally the same within each religion.

Turning then to the Catholic Church, all he requires from his friends is that they should accept him, their Roman Catholic friend, and put up with what they may consider his queer views, because he is prepared to put up with everything of corresponding oddity that he sees in them. But he stands by the living personality of the Roman Catholic Church which is to him the manifestation of God on earth. The Roman Catholic Church cannot err. The union of the Church with God cannot be broken. But the finest jewel in her crown is her charity, her capacity to love even those who do not know that they are her children, and who yet are her children. And to these she is less severe than to those who are still in her own household.

This is Massignon's solution.

Mr. Charles Williams, in leading the debate, said that speaking as an Englishman and an Anglican, he would like to underline what M. Massignon had said about the necessity for intellectual choice and intellectual decision, for recognising belief as an intellectual choice and not a matter of emotion. On the other hand, M. Saurat had referred to the experiment which took place in the soul of man and the relation of the intellect to that experiment and to the experience which that experiment involved. This might be one of the greatest obstacles to creating a world-fellowship. One of the most profound difficulties in human existence was grasping that other people existed, that their ideas were not ours, nor their emotions ours.

With regard to the word love, Mr. Williams found another difficulty. While he distrusted the word "love", he found the word "charity" worse. He would like to recover the word "love", but this could only be done if we realised that love is an intellectual thing as much as anything. Love, he said, is nothing else but the willing of good. It is not getting into a state. It is not feeling how good other people are to you. It is nothing else but the recognition that other people exist, and the incredibly difficult attempt to will good. Yet there is something else besides willing good to others: there is putting yourself in a position where other people can love you. "I find it much easier to will good to everyone than to realise that everyone is willing good to me, being patient with me, tolerating me, putting up with my errors, my incredible, abysmal imbecility."

Coming back to the question of the intellect, he said that we should never get any nearer to understanding another faith by denigrating our own. It is necessary to build up and maintain asceticism of emotion. It is

necessary to know that one is right, but it is not necessary to feel that one is right. It is necessary to be firm on dogma: it is not necessary to have emotion about dogma—and certainly not about other people's dogmas. It is assumed continually, he argued, that love and judgment are two opposite things which cannot co-exist. But no one who has ever been in love with anyone will have the smallest doubt of the co-existence of love and judgment. Anybody who experiences love experiences moral authority. Anybody who experiences moral authority experiences a sense of judgment if he falls from that authority. But, as Massignon said, the sense of authority is for yourself, the sense of love is for others. It is on those granite things, concluded Mr. Williams, that one has to erect whatever belief one has, and upon them, and only upon them, can any bridge exist. And the bridges will be much stronger if they are built first on this fact of the intellectual decision, secondly, on the effort to combine the experience of love with the idea of judgment.

M. Berdiaeff then took up the question of Love and Charity and made a distinction between the two which much impressed the Congress. Love, he said, runs upwards; Charity downwards. Love goes to a person who is seen not as other people see that person but as that person is in Eternity. Therefore Love is always in God, and that is why it is incomprehensible to those who are not in love. These others see the loved one as he or she is in the ordinary life of the world, whereas the lover sees the loved one as he or she is in God. This love cannot be forced. We cannot make ourselves love anybody. Love is always a miracle. Charity, on the other hand, does not go to one person: it goes to all. And it can be had by making an effort, because



charity goes to a fallen world. (M. Berdiaeff assumes that the ordinary world about us *is* a fallen world.) Charity goes to the world of suffering. In heaven there will be no charity—only love. Here there is more charity than love. In particular there must be charity towards other religions. Our love goes to our own religion : our charity to other religions.

## CHAPTER VII



### THE CHRISTIAN VIEW (Protestant)

HOW LAY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OLDER CHRISTIAN Churches would approach the subject of the Congress has been shown in the last chapter. Here we shall be concerned with the views of younger offshoots from the main stem. The first to speak was a Congregationalist Minister, Rev. J. S. Whale.

Archdeacon Townsend, in the Chair, said that though the making a City of God on earth was a very hard task, yet we had learned from these meetings that men's hearts were usually broader than their minds. He referred especially to the speech which Dr. Suzuki, the Japanese Buddhist, had made at the Queen's Hall. It had charmed everyone. He did not attempt to define the spiritual ideal, but he did manage to bring us all into touch with it. It was a genuine appeal of the heart which reached the heart. It was an act of real genius done in a simple and most childlike way. So people poles apart may yet in their hearts agree, and together seek and enjoy a common vision of spiritual beauty.

Rev. J. S. Whale is in the plenitude of his power and among the most eminent of the Free Church Ministers. He approached his subject from the historical standpoint. We were at this moment in the midst of a great world crisis. But there had been other such crises, and he sought to learn the lesson from them.

The first he took was the end of one age and the slow travail to birth of a new age in the fifth century :

St. Augustine then summed up the old and was the informing genius of the new. The crisis called forth his book *Concerning the City of God*, which in its diagnosis of human ills, and in its soaring vision of the meaning of human life on earth, dominated the new Christendom of the Papacy for centuries. He asserted the transcendent realities of religion, pointing men, amid all the chances and changes of their poor mortality, to the eternal changelessness of God. Amid earth-shaking events he lived by the things which cannot be shaken.

The next great age of disintegration and rebirth fell in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The work of the Middle Ages was over. The new world of Columbus and Luther, of Galileo and Descartes, was slowly coming to birth. A new sense of the worth of the individual man emerged, and along with it, modern nationalism. The man of that time did not understand the many forces that went to its making—political, economic, intellectual, social and, not least, religious. Yet, clearly enough in that age of rapid change—when the sky was changing with Copernicus; the habitable world with the explorers; the meaning of religion with Luther; and the meaning of Churchmanship with Calvin; when the printed book, the ship and the gun were beginning to transform human life in a fashion far more momentous than anyone could then dream of—*Religion* was still one of the master passions of men, a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path; the driving force of their culture; the expression of that life in God which we cannot but believe to be the most precious heritage of the past to us modern men.

And what he himself meant by the term Religion, Mr. Whale then went on to explain. He did not wish to water down the revealed and historically conditioned

religion which he knew into a vague and inoffensive religiosity. Every truly religious man—be he Hindu or Muslim, Jew or Christian, Jesuit or Puritan—was a man of precise notions : like the sons of Eli, he preferred raw flesh to sodden. The Congress was not there to advocate some new syncretism, nor to pretend that all religions were but aspects of one and the same religion. It was because the Graeco-Roman world of the first centuries of the Christian Era was such a mush of vague religiosity that the concrete individuality and objectivity of the Christian faith finally triumphed. And in the second great period of transition in Western Europe religion in the above sense was still the vital principle sustaining the common life of civilised man. The unity beneath all the individuality and variety of its dogmatic form was belief in the sovereignty of God, and the life of the Church in prayer and praise was its abiding expression. The civilisation of the West was still Christendom, not only in name but in fact.

The speaker then suggested that we ourselves are entering willy-nilly into a new world with an incalculable future : The last century was dominated by the one triumphant fact of Natural Science. Already it has invaded and outwardly transformed the life of civilised mankind at almost every point, and it promises to continue the transformation on a scale unimaginably vast. But man is not ready for this freedom ; he is not good enough for Science ; he is constitutionally impotent to exercise it aright. Science leaves men to decide for themselves what they will *do* with discoveries that are so vast in their potentiality for good or evil. What they do depends not upon science but upon themselves : not on the intellect but on the will. And whether this is to be the will which, empirically considered, is enslaved in

its very constitution, or whether it is to be enabled by supernatural power, by a Word from the Beyond, freely to choose the good, depends ultimately upon what men believe—upon the abiding motive and supreme loyalty of their life ; that is, it depends upon whether or no they are men of religion. What this age needs, then, is religion. It has lost faith. England is called a Christian country, but widespread paganism is more than a possibility among us. In spite of all the noble work of the Churches these are lean years. There is famine in the world, not of bread, nor of water, but of religion. There is no profusion of the Holy Spirit among us : we have lost our nerve because we have lost faith. The multitude have lost their ancient certainties ; they have no solid and enduring faith, in the certainty and power of which they can live their mortal life and come in the end to die. Yet men cannot and do not dispense altogether with religion. They are by nature spiritual beings and they cannot and do not live in a complete vacuum of irreligion. *Mere* freedom is no freedom. Men must find some principle which will give coherence, direction and devotion to their lives. It is no accident that Nationalism or Racialism has become “man’s other Religion.” But true, full religion is far other than a philosophical principle, gathering together the scattered ends of human life and knitting them into a unity. Primarily, it does not mean the holding of certain beliefs about the nature of ultimate reality, but coming into living, obedient communion with that reality in prayer and praise and decisive living. Religion is rooted in Revelation. It asserts that there is a Word from the Beyond for our predicament. Many are rediscovering this Word because of their awakening sense of need for what it offers. The sentimental and irreligious optimisms of the nineteenth

century are giving place to a new discovery of the old fact that evil is a terrible reality in the world, and that man is not able to control it by his own powers, nor to get rid of it by the resources of civilisation. This world *is* a Wilderness. And it is the very essence of religion that in it we have to do with a Spiritual Rock, which stands in the Wilderness as the source of life and power.

We have, then, continues Mr. Whale, to rediscover living religion and repudiate all mere intellectualism into which living religion so easily degenerates. Argument about religion is not religion. A man may speak much about what he believes or cannot believe, yet forget that *prayer* is the very condition and expression of real religion. One does not believe in the God of religion at all if one does not hear Him speaking and make answer. His revelation confronts us as a demand. God and Worship are, therefore, correlative terms. Religion, he concluded, is a life and death business. In it the whole soul and the whole of existence are at stake. And it is religion which is man's deep and abiding need.

Pundit Lalan, a representative of Jainism, led the discussion. "When I entered into the City of God," he said, "I asked Augustine and others to give me light. They showed me the way, and yet I could not see God. Again I went on, and when I came to St. Paul he said to me : 'You are nearly at home.' And the light came more and more. I knelt down in St. Paul's Cathedral, and then I saw the Lord, the brother of the Lord in whom I believe. And he said words different from the words I had been taught, but the sense was the same. The God whom I saw in St. Paul's Cathedral is the same One, although the expressions used about Him may be different. That Great Personality said : 'God is within you.' Then I

began to see within me. I tried to tone down the waves into ripples. I began to say : ' One cannot know God unless one feels Him ' . . . Christ is the Father of Christians and Krishna is the Father of Hindus. What relation is there ? All Christians are fellows among themselves ; all followers of Krishna are fellows among themselves. But are Christians and Hindus fellows ? The Father of Christ and the Father of Krishna are One. Therefore we are cousins. . . . I revere that person who found the word fellowship. It is the translation of love. Expressions are different, but we are all equal. Every human being is the fellow of the other. It is in that we can see God. . . . And I say that if you want to know what Jainism is, read Emerson. He says almost the same as the Indian teachers. He lifted me up also : he made me understand what my Jainism is. He made me understand the words of the Lord of all Christianity."

The old Pundit's pronunciation of English made it a little difficult to follow him. But his sincerity and his spirituality were very apparent, and his smile and simple charm of manner greatly attracted people to him.

The Japanese philosopher Anasaki, known in America as well as here, carried on the debate. He said that, in going backwards and forwards between Japan and England year after year, he had seen with his own eyes the turmoil in which the nations were involved. He saw the world in the travail of a new birth. Yet he derived some hope for the future from the experiences of mankind in the past. At different epochs of world history, particularly in Asia, there had been great spiritual awakenings. Five or six centuries before Christ there had been the epochs of Buddha and Confucius. In Buddhist terms, there had been the awakening realisation of the Buddha nature in every one of us. Later on there had

arisen great saints and great thinkers, and in Japan Buddhist reformers whose names might not be known to Westerners but were precious in Japanese history. And in spite of the different points of view, one basic identity in them was the realisation of Buddha nature ; man had awakened to his own spiritual dignity. Professor Anasaki concluded by saying that as an historian he felt that there must be some spiritual fountain gushing over the world from time to time and giving rise to spiritual geniuses who would lead and inspire future generations. And the present was one of those critical epochs.

Bishop Wedgwood, in closing the debate, said that Mr. Whale had postulated an aboriginal wrongness and shown the great difficulty of the problem of evil : we were not ready for our freedom. " Because I had myself to face a number of problems like these some thirty years ago, I find myself to-day a Minister not of the Church of England but of another independent Church." He had found a solution of many of these difficulties in the philosophy of Hinduism. And what we need, he went on, is to envisage these problems in a much wider perspective, such as is to be had in the Hindu presentation of things. Hindu scriptures speak of the diversified existence of beings as rooted in the One and proceeding from it. That way of looking at things postulates, as a complement to our doctrine of evolution, a process of involution such as is still taking place—the pouring down of spirit into matter. We see that process working itself out through the mineral kingdom. There is reason to suppose that there is some primitive form of life in minerals. And when we come to the vegetable and animal kingdoms we see an enormous range in the diversity of life. But we observe in man that nations, taken as



units, are very far behind the stage reached by individuals. Individuals are quite ready to lay down arms and work for peace. But it is most difficult for nations to work in harmony with one another.

This, argued Bishop Wedgwood, explains the problem of evil. There is an earlier phase of things, the downward working of the Divine Self—the “Self” as it is called in the Hindu scriptures. The Self has to be unselfed. This makes for the warring of the powers of good against the powers of evil. But the upward flow of the Divine Life will eventually prevail. It is all a question of perspective.

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The other Protestant Minister who delivered an address was Rev. P. T. R. Kirk, Director-General of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, a clergyman of the Church of England. Dr. J. F. Merrill, who was in the Chair, said the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to which he belonged was probably unsurpassed by any other religious body in its activity in teaching the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man. Almost without exception the missionaries they sent abroad returned to their homes feeling that the people among whom they had lived and worked were the finest people on earth. And they never ceased to love these people abroad.

“With us,” said Dr. Merrill, “religion is an everyday active way of life, inspired by a faith in a Living God. We teach that there is one God, Who is a personal Being and the Father of us all: one Redeemer, Jesus Christ, through whose death and resurrection every human soul, as a resurrected person, will live eternally in a realm suited to him. We stand ready to co-operate with any movement such as this that aims at bringing about a

better understanding and promoting good-will among men."

Rev. P. T. R. Kirk, speaking from a wide experience of industrial conditions, directed his address to showing that whatever practical measures man might decide to take to ensure economic peace, there must above all things be common agreement that such decisions must be taken in the light of moral and spiritual principles, and must be accepted by individuals and nations alike. We have need, he urged, to restore to men a unifying faith in God as personal, and the spiritual and living Father who out of love created the world and revealed Himself in His Son as Love in person. It is Christianity which lays a value on personality unknown in any other religion or philosophy, except in so far as this has been learned from the Christian Gospel. It is the love of God for each human being that gives him infinite worth. This is the point which Mr. Kirk stressed throughout his paper.

Our economics to-day are atheistic and materialistic, contended Mr. Kirk. The satisfaction of man's physical needs and material wants is regarded as the aim and end of life, and it is supposed that if he can get all he asks along this line he will be satisfied. God has no place in men's thoughts or activities. Life is organised without reference to its Author. Faith, religion and its application to life have gone overboard.

To Mr. Kirk it is amazing that there should be an economic problem at all, seeing how prolific the earth is, and how able man is to extract her secrets from nature. The root cause of the trouble he believes to lie in our monetary system. The system of issuing and distributing money is wrong, and therefore our whole economic, political, and social structure is wrong also. We talk

about Peace ; we never have peace. What we have is perpetual economic warfare, broken for the worse from time to time by some desperate nation which seeks relief from the stranglehold of the moneylender by a display of physical violence. It is sickening hypocrisy, said Mr. Kirk, for Christian people, the League of Nations, and other well-meaning bodies, to appeal for good-will between the nations when they condone a system which places the nations in the position of creditor and squeezed debtors. What we need, then, for our monetary system is a sound morality which will give stability to its purchasing power and which will bear a direct relation to consumable goods and services.

In regard to unemployment, his argument was that any economic order which is continually throwing out of employment large numbers of people in all countries must stand condemned. Instead of serving the needs of the community, it is depriving millions of their right not only to live, but to enjoy their spiritual heritage as free human beings. Its greatest curse is, indeed, that it cuts at the very roots of fellowship and human brotherhood, for these, our brothers, are by degrees driven out of the community-life and compelled to live in segregated groups in which they are made all too conscious of social division. We cannot have fellowship, co-operation, and peace until our world-order is based on a political system which secures to every citizen liberty of personality and economic freedom. And we must drive out fear. Whilst fear and distrust reign in the hearts of men there can be no fellowship. Distrust must be replaced by confidence, and fear by love. What is essential above all things, Mr. Kirk maintained, is a reassertion of the primacy of the spiritual—though the spiritual must never be placed in contra-distinction to the material or the

physical. A true economic system depends upon keeping the two together. Only thus shall we rightly live and rightly use material things. True religion regulates man's use of and desire for material things. Only as men become channels for God's grace to one another, working in co-operation instead of competition, shall we remove the economic barriers to peace.

Upon this address Maulvi Dard led the debate. He is the zealous Minister of the Mosque at Wimbledon, and a missionary of the Qadiani Sect. With perfect courtesy he disagreed with some of Mr. Kirk's conclusions. Especially did he disagree with the statements : (1) that Western civilisation alone holds the key to reconciliation ; (2) that it is in Christ alone and at His Cross that reconciliation will be found, and (3) that the real issue to-day is Christ or atheism. "I have a profound conviction," said the Maulvi, "that Islam alone can establish peace and true fellowship among mankind, because it is the final and the fullest revelation of God." The Maulvi admitted, however, that the advocates of other faiths might also hold the same view about their respective faiths.

If God loves His creatures, as all religions declare, why should He not guide erring humanity by His word? He provides for our physical needs : why should He not provide for our spiritual need? To this question the Maulvi replied that God had sent His word even to-day by the mouth of Ahmad of Qadian, just as He spoke to the Prophets and Saints of yore. We should try and settle our differences with the help of reason. But the history of the world bears ample testimony to the fact that true and lasting fellowship is actually brought about only through the agency of divinely inspired messengers of God. They may be persecuted at the moment, but time shows that they gradually succeed in working such a

change in the hearts of men that warring humanity is knit together like members of one and the same family. Such a one was Ahmad of Qadian.

Mr. D. Mackay suggested the necessity and possibility of a clear-cut, common system which should enable results as provable as mathematics and as rigorous as arithmetic itself to be obtained.

Mr. Joseph Cannon said that several times it had been stated here that diversity of belief was a good thing. He could not accept that. He believed that truth, and God, and the plan of salvation were universal, but that there was a basis on which we could all agree. Any religion which did not teach tolerance, fellowship, and love was not worth the name of religion. So if we should go away without any formulated plan for making a new world, we might at least be one of the great forces in bringing people to feel the brotherhood of man.

## CHAPTER EIGHT



### THE HINDU VIEW—I

THE HINDUS MADE A FINE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONGRESS in showing how Hinduism promotes the spirit of fellowship. And I will deal with Professor S. N. Das Gupta's address first, partly because it took the most comprehensive view, but also because it was preceded by a speech by the Chairman, the Chief Rabbi, which served as a valuable introduction to the series of addresses.

The Chief Rabbi disclaimed any special knowledge of Hinduism, but he spoke from the angle of Judaism on the idea underlying the World Congress of Faiths. Viewed in one way, he said, it presented an aspect which would make it the duty of anyone holding religious convictions, as distinct from merely religious opinions, to oppose it. For upon the semi-educated mind it was likely to leave the impression that all religions were very much alike and equally true, and that therefore they might well be merged into one to form an universal religion—a proceeding which would be about as practical as an attempt to merge all languages into one. Of course, religions are not all on one level, said the Chief Rabbi, and it is as much the mission of Judaism to teach the world that there are false gods and false ideals, as to bring it nearer to the true one. Again, he said, religions differ not only in matters of belief, dogma, and philosophical theory, but also in the very emphasis they place on the ethical duties of man. Under that head religious oracles have spoken in strange and mutually contradictory voices. No wonder that those to whom all

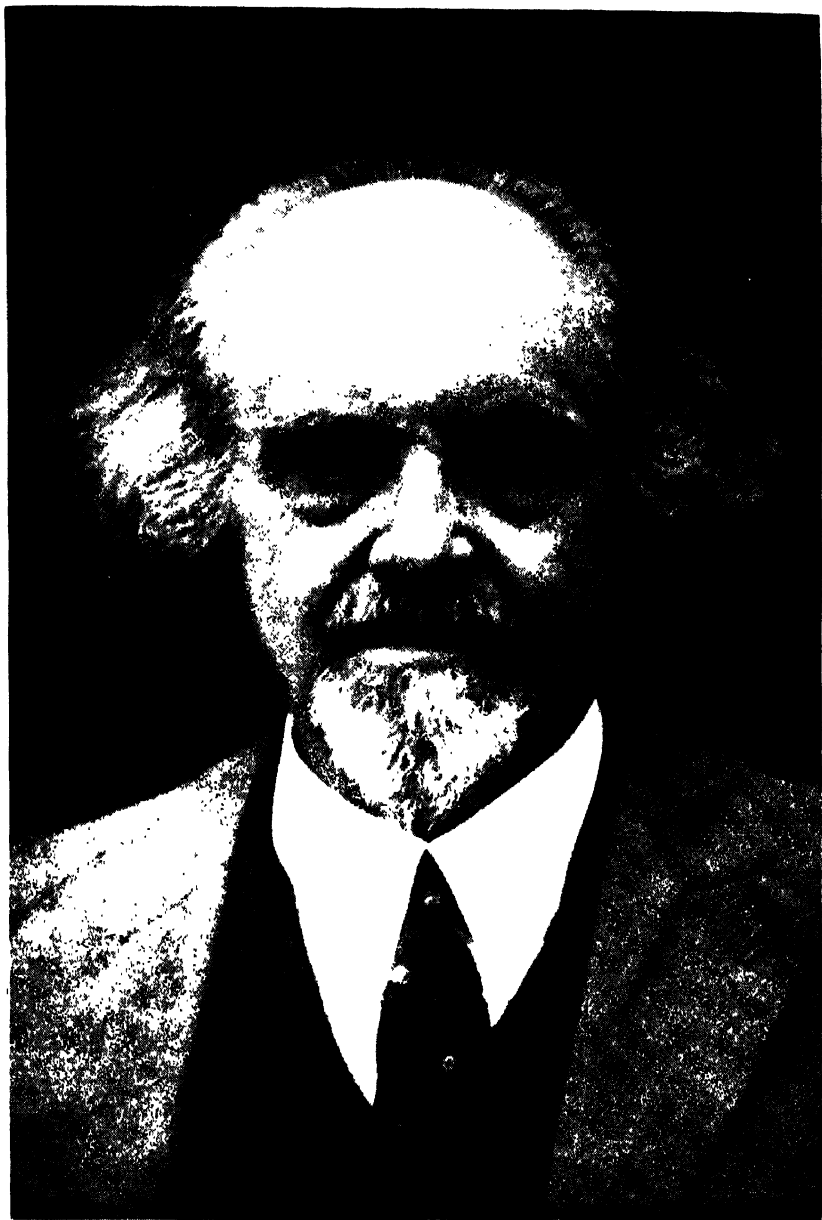
religions are equally true are often led to a kind of moral nihilism.

But quite other would be our judgment of a World Congress of Faiths when we were clearly given to understand that its purpose was to combat common evils that beset humanity and promote the common good; to create among the adherents of the various faiths the spirit of fellowship, and, while preserving their distinctive characters of race, nationality, and creed, unite them in the effort to rid mankind of its heritage of the bad and fortify it against the danger of extinction through fratricide. That way especially lay the definite service religion could render stricken humanity to-day.

The Chief Rabbi believed that what is wanted to-day is the heart that can make it as impossible to civilised men to resort to wholesale carnage to settle their disputes, as it would be for them to witness the butcheries of the Roman amphitheatre of ancient times. It was in the belief that religion alone can create that new heart, and that the World Fellowship of Faiths might guide it to a more active feeling of human brotherhood, which is the soil on which new heart grows, that he presided at the meeting to be addressed by Professor Das Gupta.

Professor Das Gupta is not so "spiritual" as some of the other Indians at the Congress. But he is a man of massive intellect and highly respected as a philosopher by English philosophers. He has already published three volumes of a great work on Hindu philosophy. He therefore spoke from fulness of knowledge and his expression of opinion should have great weight.

His main contention was that the spiritual principle is one in all men. The equality of all, the freedom of all, and the sanctity of all should be recognised. Every man has an equal right to the development of his



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*Greek Orthodox Church*





capacities and the attainment of happiness. But the religious spirit is not satisfied merely with the recognition of such rights ; it calls for the positive development of fellowship and love. "Love all men as thyself, is the watchword of Hinduism." The presence of a spiritual principle in man—so well illustrated by the experience of joy an artist has in his creation and which he longs to communicate to others—is the bedrock of Hinduism. And the fundamental aim of religion is to secure a supreme awakening to this principle. Religion is art in the deepest and widest sense. In religious activity the spirit strives to reveal itself in and through the entire personality. Joy proceeds from the identification of others with oneself. And this recognition of the universality of one's own spiritual self implies the outflow of our own joy into others—which is but another name for love. This is the Hindu contention. And Professor Das Gupta proceeds to show that moral science, when abstracted from religion, fails to justify itself as an exact science. Morality is like a flower that blooms on the plant of religion and loses its true significance when parted from it. Morality pre-supposes society, and society means the recognition of the fellowship of human beings. If the fundamental fact of religion be the recognition of the spirituality of all, and if this recognition is not merely intellectual or metaphysical, but an emergent fact that arises from the moulding of our entire personality, the morality that flows from religion does not involve any splitting of our personality, as is the case even in the most rigorous creed of morals. He adds that this higher morality which flows from religion is not satisfied with the equal treatment of others, nor with regarding each man as a sufficient end in himself, nor even with an intellectual appreciation of oneness ;

but only with intense feelings of love, friendship, and compassion. Universal friendship, universal charity, universal compassion, imperturbability of temper at the defects of others, and feelings of happiness at the happiness of others—these are the principles of Hindu morality which flow from religion. While the sphere of ordinary morality is limited to particular societies or nations, the scope of religious morality is unrestricted by the limitations of nations, races, societies, creeds and the like. It proceeds from a positive outflow of love. A truly religious man is in love, peace, and friendship with the whole world.

This, according to Professor Das Gupta, is the contribution which Hinduism can make to promoting the spirit of fellowship.

Professor L. A. Reid, in leading the debate, said he thought the speaker had not been quite fair to ethics. Ethics ought to deal with fundamental principles rather than with rules: the science of moral life should be pursued as far as it can be by itself, in order to see how far it will go. On the other hand, Professor Reid agreed profoundly with what Das Gupta had said about morality being like a flower which blooms on the plant of religion. And he went on to say that the view of love which religion maintained was that of a great emotion which took hold of us and moved us. It was feeling: but it was not instinctive feeling: it was religious feeling. It was a great emotion, a love for all men—not this man or that man because he is so and so, but all men because all men are human beings. And such a love was born of the love of God. It sympathised with what mere reason did not see. It had understanding and insight on the one hand, and desire on the other. It drove the one who loved to full and rich expression. And this meant

that ethics was not enough. Ethics required the transformation effected by a love beyond natural love—by a supernatural love.

In answer to this the Brahmacharya desired to bring out the Hindu conception of ethics. He said that all activities of Hindu life are religious activities. The Hindu does not distinguish between sacred and secular. You cannot divide Hindu life into ethical, moral, secular, and religious. Man is a social being because he is part of that order which is the universe. In true meditation we realise and directly experience the object of what we take on faith. Faith is the starting point and its consummation is the complete experience of God, that is, the Universal Self. What William James said we had to take on faith, the Hindu takes on experience. The “will to believe” means that something which lies within my own soul corresponds with that Something which lies at the centre of the universe, and through meditation and contemplation I experience it in its fulness and completeness.

Professor Das Gupta, in replying to the discussion, said that one fundamental fact is common to Hinduism in all its forms : that every man should habituate himself to regarding other people as his friends, to looking upon their defects as unimportant, and having a feeling of friendship and charity for others. But in the Western world nationalism is a great impediment. In England the newspapers suggest that there is no nation like the English. Americans think they are in advance of every other country. In Germany they sing “*Deutschland über Alles !*” Every country, through auto-suggestion, raises its own vanity. This is what is keeping back the unification of the West. So if, said the Professor, from school-time onward people could be trained in the

principles of international ethics and be made to realise that each nation has the capacity to be equal to any other ; that it is wrong to consider that Britain alone can stand on the spike of Shiva away in the heavens, or that Germany alone stands in the ethereal regions, and that no other country is like England, Italy, or Germany, much practical progress could be made. And from one point of view, he said, this is more important to Britain than to any other country, because Britain has a vast Empire. Of all the countries she ought to be most careful not to advertise herself. And she can afford not to. Younger nations may have to blow their own trumpets. But Great Britain is big enough not to need it.

In conclusion he said that the day people understand that it is as criminal to do something against international ethics as against national ethics, we shall be brought nearer our goal.

Professor Mahendranath Sircar was of a less intellectual and more spiritual type than Professor Das Gupta. He took as his subject *Prayer and Experience* as the method of approach. Looking to an integrated humanity embosomed in the Divine as the goal of our endeavours in the Congress, he showed how prayer, as fostering a direct connection with the Universal life, made a spiritual opening. Man must discover his true Self in God and thereby enlarge the orbit of his being and consequently his sympathies. But the Divine cannot work in man unless man has transformed his egoistic impulses and seeks divine guidance. And Sircar makes the important point that man, instead of trying to make God the instrument of his own desires—as in imploring God's

help in waging war—should rather make himself an instrument for the expression of Divine life.

We should look to a finer evolution of man, shining in wisdom, radiant in beauty, and moving in cosmic harmony. With the intensive penetration into Pure Being by prayer there emerges within us a sense of the Holy, of the majestic order of creation, its beauty and dignity. And repose in the Divine Peace fills us with new strength. Prayer brings down the Divine wisdom, removes inertia and ignorance and infuses new life. The Hindus regard Prayer as something that moves the higher being in man, makes him responsive to spiritual potencies and shows a wonderful correspondence between the higher forces of the microcosm on the one hand and the macrocosm on the other. Sircar quoted Whitehead as having worked out the organic conception of the world and as extending this conception of organism even to the atoms ; and he asserts that the Vedic seers anticipated this conception ages ago. According to them, none of the forces that work in nature are inert, none unconscious. The universe is a Divine Being. “We are parts of one stupendous whole, Whose body nature is, and God the Soul.” Prayer is the true guide to the living mysteries of the universe, for it is reception and response, and owing to its delicate sensitiveness the psychic being is able to feel and respond to the radiant, beneficent forces at work in the heart of creation. It inspires service in reverence and awe. It vouchsafes a bliss which no satiation of desire can give, and a satisfaction that no human success can procure. And it shifts the centre of a man’s being from self to God, till he feels within himself the presence and force of the cosmic urge. True prayer is thus the saturation of our being with the spirit of God : the Holy Spirit descends into

our spirit. And the finest fruit of prayer is the awakening of our super-consciousness—the consciousness of Divine kinship and likeness to God.

But man cannot remain in this transcendental state. Even the Christs and Buddhas could not stay there long. The Divine purpose in creation soon draws man down to be active in the drama of life. Love's creative impulse impels him to strive to establish the Divine on earth, where he will move in grace and beauty to the amelioration of human miseries. And with this sense of all being knit together by the silken threads of integrating love, there dawns upon a man a new sense of responsibility.

What is needed, then, he believed, is the retention of the higher consciousness which prayer gives, and the transformation of man's impulses in the light of this consciousness. The forces that are working to-day are so disruptive that we should pray God to descend on earth and totally transform this earthly life. The world to-day has grown too materialist and intellectual. It needs the integrating force of Love and the transforming power of Faith.

Having thus dealt with prayer, Sircar came to show the part played by sharing spiritual experiences. A truly spiritual phenomenon attracts us by its gentleness, delicacy and silence. There is an urge to enjoy the spirit, and with the urge comes a demand for fellowship of the spirit. And when we have this we are impressed with the likeness of the spiritual experiences of all those who have sought them. The company of loving saints evokes a common understanding. Our being is suffused with the delight of comradeship. Sharing spiritual experiences should develop that finer sympathy which enables us to see the beauty and the meaning of every form of spiritual expression. The fellowship of under-

standing between different Churches can be deepened by sharing the dominant note in each Faith. And to complete the expression of life in its universality, a sympathetic understanding of the spiritual experiences of all faiths is essential.

Mr. Clifford Bax, who was in the Chair, said that it was only religion that could save the world in the future. If people concentrated upon material objects there was bound to be a clash between them. There were many religions in the world, but that did not much matter. Religion was not the holding of certain ideas ; it was as much a kind of sensibility as having a musical or an artistic taste. All really religious people, when they were truly religious, met at the top. Our specific ideas and beliefs were formed and confirmed by the limitations of our intellects. What really mattered was that we should have the experience of religion. There could be no religion without a sense of survival of consciousness, and there could be no true religion without not merely a conception of unity, but a sense of it. If we truly felt that other people were as real as ourselves, we should spontaneously love them. That was where people who were not merely exponents of dogma, but possessed of a true religious sense, would meet. They were bound to go forth to other people because they did not feel a complete separateness.

Professor Marcault, opening the debate, said that while it was perfectly true that prayer led to the mystical experience, he would plead for the lesser forms and levels of prayer. Whenever a man felt the Divine Presence near him there was prayer. There were a number of religious movements which led a sincere religious life and to which the Divine was a continual companionship. People who felt that in whatever they were doing there



was the Divine, were leading more useful lives than those who, in tremendous power, gather at their own summit and look out towards the world instead of upwards towards the Divine. It was perfectly true psychologically that a person who prayed for the satisfaction of his ordinary material needs was one who prayed to a small god. It was also true that as we rose in the scale of our spiritual understanding and power we rose in the worship of greater and greater gods ; so that at the end of our quest for the Divine we gathered together within us all that could know, that could love and serve, to the whole Universal that could be known, loved and served. We reached communion with the real Universal Divine, the one God of all gods.

Mr. Govind said that it was very hard to find the principles of religion. Religion did not lie in Christianity, or in Hinduism, or in Islam. It lay in ourselves. We were religion. We should see religion, and not be proud of either Christianity, Hinduism or Islam.

Mr. Parikh said that we might not want actual prayer if we felt the nearness of and communion with God. But most of us did not feel that, and for us prayer was necessary. The real province of prayer was the purification and elevation of the soul. By it we got nearer to God and could see our real selves ; we could get rid of the gross sensuality of life and visualise our own self, which was nothing but God.

Rev. R. G. Griffiths said that those who belonged to the same school of thought and religion as he did tacitly assumed that God, whilst being everything which the profoundest philosophies could picture Him as being, was personal. He was all that each of us was individually in the deepest sense, and infinitely greater, but He was personal. Therefore in our prayers we

addressed a Person—"Our Father". We were active beings, infused with the spirit of God, and we should use not only one of our faculties, but all.

Professor Sircar, in replying to the discussion, said that the tendency was to pass on from the personal movements of consciousness to that acme of consciousness in which all distinction and difference between God and man was dissolved. This had been the experience not only of the Christian but of all spiritual orders. In Hinduism he found the same kind of experience in the lives of the great teachers, and among Muslims Sufism was a means of penetration into absolute consciousness.

## CHAPTER NINE



### THE HINDU VIEW—II

SIR RADHAKRISHNAN, SPEAKING FROM THE STANDPOINT of a Hindu, made one of the most valuable contributions to the Congress. If he is a mystic he can also reason. And if he can reason he has also the mystic outlook.

For his address Sir Frederick White, the first Speaker of the Indian Legislative Assembly, took the Chair. He spoke of Sir Radhakrishnan as one who stood in the front rank of interpreters of religion in the modern world and who possessed a peculiar ability to interpret the part which the religion of his own country could play in the development of religious thought. There has rarely been a time in human history, said Sir Frederick, when it was more necessary to discover means and avenues of agreement, when in so many fields there are profound risks of disagreement. And this Congress should bring people together from all parts of the world to lay a necessary emphasis upon the uniting factor of faith.

Sir Radhakrishnan insisted that a fellowship of faiths, though it might appreciate other faiths, did not imply any easy indulgence of weakness or error. It was not the intellectual's taste for moderation, or a politician's love of compromise, or simply a negative freedom from antipathies. It was understanding, insight, full trust in the basic reality which feeds all faiths and in its power to lead us to the truth. It believed in the deeper religion of the Spirit which would be adequate for all people, vital

enough to strike deep roots and powerful enough to unify each individual in himself and bind all together in the realisation of their common condition and common goal.

Looking out upon the world, Radhakrishnan saw that though science drew nations into closer neighbourhood with one another there was no real and effective unity. And however much statesmen might try, they could not succeed unless there was an improvement in the spiritual life of mankind. It is, he said, for those who believe in the power of the Spirit to realise ideals to prepare the minds of men for the new world order. The world is yet without vision. Can the organised religions help us to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of the new fellowship and help the world to find the soul it is seeking?

Radhakrishnan sees the difficulties historical religions have: They are disposed to make out that the Kingdom of God belongs to the future world. God the universal Spirit, the Father of all mankind, becomes a national deity. Monotheism relapses into tribalism. Religion is confused with religions—the seeking and finding of God with creeds and codes, sects and Churches—knowing and growing in spirit with obedience to dogmas, observance of ceremonies, conformity to an inflexible moral code, and acceptance of a religious, political or social system as the ideal order. Moreover, every religion with a claim to finality and absoluteness desires to impose its own opinions on the rest of the world, and we do not see the ludicrousness of these clashing absolutisms simply because we are so familiar with them.

Then, on the Ethical side, conformity to a narrow moral code impoverishes the joy and beauty of life.

And the tendency of credal religion is to turn towards an after-life and make the regeneration of earthly life a secondary motive. The priest or church takes the place of the spirit. If you profess the creed and join the group, certain privileges and immunities belong to you for ever. But if we study the different religions we shall find that they are founded on spiritual experiences, intuitive discernments of which the intellect afterwards gives practical definitions. Religions are founded by prophets, though organised by priests. And the prophet's experience is in the intuitive apprehension of a beyond that is present, of an infinitude in which his individual consciousness is momentarily absorbed in order that it may find itself in a greater and better fulness and certitude. And this experience carries the conviction of the living reality of God. In these moments of our deepest life and experience the Supreme is grasped as the central reality.

This spiritual experience not only reveals to us the splendour of our nature in the solitude of the soul but at-ones us with our fellows in a glowing exaltation of love, and makes life in all its aspects not only beautiful and significant but noble and divine. When a man is anchored in spirit his ways are absolute. His delight in God is the peace and bliss that pass all understanding. He is by nature a revolutionary, for no existent order of life can ever satisfy him. He belongs already to a kingdom of ends—to a society of free personalities united only by a spiritual kinship. These men of the spirit with their profound sense of reality and their vision of the ideal are the prophetic souls. They are men of faith, with a light in their eyes, a song in their hearts.

But the man who has thus felt in his pulse the reality

of God, scarcely trusts himself to handle it worthily. He adopts an attitude of reticence before the numinous. Silence seems to him more natural and more adequate than any kind of enforced utterance. The Buddha refused to give utterance, shape and substance to the central truth of life. So the prophet is diffuser of the religious spirit rather than the formulator of an intellectual orthodoxy. He regards every theory as more or less tentative and no one as final and completely true. That any one should have a complete knowledge of the inner being of God he knows is an utter impossibility.

So Radhakrishnan's conclusion is that religion is deeper than theology for it is life, and deeper than morality for it is love. It gives wings to morality and makes it a regenerative force in human life.

One of the most valuable parts of Sir Radhakrishnan's address was where he showed that creeds and ritual, though they may not be of primary importance, yet have their part to play in religious life. A purely spiritual religion can never be; for inward living must have outward expression. Even as the soul fashions for itself a body, so men's thoughts and ideas tend to embody themselves in some concrete form. Dogmas and rites are not unnecessary or unworthy, he says. Though they are not its essence, they are aids and supports to religion. Dogma should not be a prison in which spiritual life would die, but it may well be a temporary mould into which that life may flow.

Dealing with the problem of fellowship among peoples he said that until a spiritual oneness based on psychological principles is developed, such fellowship can only be attempted by the mechanical means of political

adjustments. But the higher hope of humanity is that the spiritual oneness of the world, enriched by a freer inner variation and a freely varied self-expression, will be accomplished by the growing number of men who will devote themselves to the task. To spiritualise mankind we need not a new cult or a new creed but a sustained endeavour at spiritual evolution. And this will demand not so much a change of faith as a vitalising of it. In order to grow, religions have had to emancipate themselves from the trammels of authority. But if they are to take us to an ideal which is truly and completely human, they must pursue the course of emancipation in a more rapid and forceful manner.

The hope that Sir Radhakrishnan sees in the religious situation to-day is that leaders of different religious groups in all religions believe in the hidden possibilities of their respective religions and their adaptability to new needs and new knowledge. Each religion is trying to go back to its source, make itself purer and more vital. The distinction between the form of religion and the power of the spirit is being recognised. Men are seeing that not subscription to a creed but perpetual self-renewal is the price of spiritual freedom. And such purified religion will recognise that the African or the Asiatic has the same right as the European or the American to be an end to himself so as to become all that he is capable of becoming. In a Congress like this where cultivated minds from other religions are met, we are bound to realise that each religion has its own estimable contribution and no one religion has all the saints. By comparing our ideas and traditions with those of others, we save ourselves from the narrowness of religious provincialism and feel inclined to agree with Clement of Alexandria when he says that "there has

always been a natural manifestation of the one Almighty God amongst all right-thinking men.”

Mr. Gerald Heard, in leading the debate, said that society to-day was in chaos simply because it was unbalanced. It had made enormous progress physically but had not made proportionate progress psychologically, or, as some would say, spiritually. Formerly people turned from a world obsessed, as they thought, with theology to a world obsessed with economics. To-day they are turning in desperation to psychology. But we must make our religion clear. Of necessity we pursue truth. Just as earnestly we have to pursue goodness. The one dogma of our lives should be that there can never be an ultimate separation between the two. May we not investigate how best we may practise that form of life which will give us experience of how spiritual reality may be contacted? Without experiment we can know nothing. Let us therefore attempt, while we pursue the vision of the Absolute, also to find out how we may attain it. We have to ask psychological questions about the mind, about the relations of mind and body, and about the range of subconscious mind. But that binding between soul and soul we can only realise by effort, by crossing the path, by making union with the universal life.

Nothing in the address, said Mr. Heard, gave him greater pleasure than the constant stress on the fact that we had arrived at a critical moment in history of a kind that had never existed before. It is a moment full of crises; but the other word for crisis is opportunity. The moment is therefore full of opportunity. If we dare to go forward we must take the heart and essence out of the old forms and make new forms for them—new bottles for the new wine. Dogmas arise when people



are afraid of being judged by their lives. There would be no dogmas if our lives showed that we had been in contact with reality. We can do that, and the discussion should help our minds to the method, the practice, the discipline, and the knowledge whereby those lives may be produced.

Mr. Branson, continuing the discussion, said that Jesus of Nazareth set another standard than organised ritual. His was all example. He taught no dogma or creed but said that the service of God was perfect freedom. He also said that the Kingdom of God was to be found upon earth. God is here. He is the central organising consciousness of the world that existed before the earliest star was born, before man ever came. And that central organising spirit is the God of Jesus.

Dr. Suzuki, who had been pressed to speak, said that it was not his custom to make speeches. "There is too much talk about spirit and dogmas, and psychology and so on. I don't think it is good for what I call our spiritual selves."

Mrs. Naomi Mitchison, speaking as a Communist, said: "Many of us are deeply religious people, but we have found no Church which can take us in or which we can take. We have found our spiritual reality and our brotherhood outside the Churches in a political movement. I would suggest that politics should deal with deeply spiritual things. In our political movement we are going to give our people something else than the pattern way of things. We are teaching them a greater love of their neighbours. But we only do it partially. We need your help. We have to respect one another. Then we shall be able both to give and to take help. And I believe the need to be profound and urgent if we

are to avoid a moral and political smash.” Mrs. Mitchison spoke with great earnestness and conviction, and members were evidently glad to know of the Communist point of view.

A criticism of a different kind was made by Professor Anasaki, who did not at all share his compatriot’s view on the necessity for silence. He emphasised the point that throughout Japanese religious history there had been very little strife and much toleration. Many Japanese were proud of the tradition. He himself had been proud of it. But now he was beginning to wonder whether there had not been too much easy acceptance of compromise. In many cases where issues ought to have been fought out they had been passed over. Facing the crisis in the world to-day he wondered if this tolerance should continue. Dr. Suzuki, he thought, had too much optimism. Anasaki asked himself whether, instead of continuing their life in this easy-going way, they should not make investigation and then fight for what they believed to be the truth. By going through the conflict they might find permanent peace.

Sir Radhakrishnan, in reply, said the question had been raised that those who believed in intuition tried to exclude the operation of the intellect. But if we go to the really great mystics we find in them an intellectual eminence and comprehensive knowledge which would have made it impossible for them to do what they did unless their intellects had been satisfied. The life of the spirit is an integral life—a life where you sanctify your body, illuminate your intellect and attain complete manhood. In such complete life there should be equal emphasis on the intellect and the intuition. He had heard that Hitler had said : “ I will go on the path that Providence has marked out for me with the certainty of

a somnambulist.” Such an attitude gives great driving power, but it cannot be regarded as being guided by intellect.

In your own life, continued Sir Radhakrishnan, you have to go sufficiently deep to establish a kind of integrality and you have also to establish a oneness with your external environment. Intuitive insight should harmonise with the human environment. He would emphasise the capacity for perfection which is in each individual, and also the intuitive calls upon each of us to perfect that nature—that deep, spiritual, divine element, which is to be found in every man. The same thing, he said, would apply when we go deeper still and reach the utmost depths of the consciousness. The same soul is there—is there unadulterated by the outward things of the world. Thus we are led back to a unity of the spiritual life. And we should never try to cling to a dogma and think: “This is the greatest Truth”; or think there is one chosen race or nation.

Referring to what Mr. Heard had mentioned about psychological practices, Sir Radhakrishnan repeated the saying: “Wisdom is written in your inward parts” and “The Kingdom of God is within you.” That being so, all we have to do is to set aside some moments in our life for the purpose of going into ourselves, retreating into our consciousness and by that purification and concentration make our souls into a clear kind of mirror. This process need not be regarded as anything occult which cannot be comprehended by ordinary individuals. It is there, and open to any who wish to find it. And when we have found it we shall recognise the same divinity in every human being and shall treat every man as an end in himself and never as only a means.

Dr. Ranjee Shahani, another Hindu, spoke more as a man of letters than as a philosopher or man of religion. Taking as the title of his address: "*A New Pilgrim's Progress*," he said that for old words we wanted new ones; for dead, living ones. We lose the inner life of old words when we use them in new circumstances and in a different temper. We repeat instead of feeling anew. The bane of much philosophy is over-refinement. Real thought is sacred and must be expressed in its divine simplicity. The totality of Being is what we seek to know. No particular race can claim to have sounded anything more than a fraction of the depths of our adventure with life. A few solitary souls—a Buddha, a Zoroaster, a Jesus, a Chuang Tzu, a Hegel, a Goethe, a Ramakrishna—have wrestled with the inscrutable enigmas of existence and have brought away for us golden gifts that we, in our ignorance, have cast aside as worthless.

This age is spoken of as a decadent age. With that Dr. Shahani does not agree. The Spirit, he believes, is always working beneath the surface of human life and awaits the right moment to manifest itself in its plenitude. There glimmers already the light of a New Dawn. A New Renaissance—the marriage of East and West—is upon us. The Dawn that betokens the Kingdom of Karuna—the Kingdom of Creative Love.

Europe, diffident of itself, has lent an open ear to the crude offerings of the East. And this is unfortunate, for it has its own path on which the East would do well to meditate. It believes in facing life by way of action. The defect of this method, Dr. Shahani thinks, is that it deals only with what appears, not with what is. To the European contemplation leads nowhere. It does not get at the facts. The East, particularly India, attempts to

understand life from within. Contemplation, not action, is its goal. Yet the distinction between the two is illusory. At bottom they are the same. So the two paths of East and West are not necessarily antagonistic, as man can live in comfort in this world and yet have all that contemplation can give him. The two activities should unite in a harmonious life. This was the way of Buddha and Jesus—in essence identical.

Dealing with the various waking states of consciousness, Dr. Shahani went on to say that even collectively they formed only a minimal fraction of life as it manifests itself in man. Waking life is but a microscopic part of the life that is lived. As to dreams, perhaps some Indian would deal with their divine aspect and discover how a knowledge of them would enrich life. In regard to deep sleep, India asserts that in this state the psyche is never absent: rather it is doubly vigilant; be we saints or sinners, we all become our real selves, released from earth's cares and placed in contact, maybe, with the very source of life. This state, India asserts, can be induced at will. *Samadhi* is the means adopted, and it puts at our disposal a larger life. Then we come to the ineffable world of Nirvana (Ecstasy). In this state we are at one with Deity. It is not a condition of absorption in the Deity, explains Dr. Shahani, but the acme of individuality. We become our own torches—a part of the light that illumines all things.

If we can keep passing from one of these states to another, without break or pause, then we shall have truly achieved immortal and eternal life. And when men, both in East and West, have risen to this height, then verily the Kingdom of Karuna will be with us. Karuna, creative love, is the raising of the individual to the full height of his possibilities. Life, more abundant life, is

what Jesus, the great lover of His kind, promised to all of us. This possibility can become an actuality. The way is open to all : for in spiritual things there can be no exclusive ownership.

So declares Dr. Shahani ; but when he comes to the problem of evil he thinks that all the religions founder on that rock. Jesus' identification of love and providence goes in the teeth of much that happens ; and, in a sense, is one of the most mischievous ideas that mankind has ever invented. So Dr. Shahani considers that the Gospel records must be both distorted and incomplete : Jesus could not have put forth a theory which is patently false. As to the idea of fate in the *Bhagavad Gita* or in the *Koran*, it is simply the idea of the ostrich who hides his head in the sand so as not to see the pursuer.

Therefore, in conclusion, Dr. Shahani recommends us to know and love all we can, because that absorbs us and delights us. For the rest we may wait, learning little by little.

Mr. H. S. L. Polak, in opening the discussion, agreed that " the totality of Being " should be our goal. Yet to know it we must, as in the Hindu legend, conquer Death itself and learn that Life is continuous and that only form changes. We have to learn that mankind is one and indivisible, that the world is a unit, that a world order, necessary, natural, and normal, must replace the present narrow nationalism, imperialisms, and dictatorships, so that the various nations and peoples may each make their special contribution to the common treasury of culture. Though the path is varied and individual, the goal is one and realisable. And some few, the pioneers of the race, have attained it and pointed the way for the rest of us, each according to his nature, to follow. Mr. Polak

thought Dr. Shahani was right in saying that no one religion contains the whole of the truth, but was wrong in saying "there is no such thing as religion: there is only this or that religion." Religion—not any super-religion—is surely the ancient and eternal Wisdom which is at the heart of all religions and which resolves the varied life of each into the perfect white light of the whole. It is only when we hear and delight in the complete symphony that we realise the totality of the Divine harmony.

He thought, also, that Dr. Shahani had done less than justice to the *Bhagavad Gita* teaching of karma. The true teaching of Krishna to Arjuna is not that man is victim of his fate, but that he may, if he will, be master of his circumstances and that he should discover in himself his own Divine nature. There again, one religion, when carefully studied, may throw light upon the teaching of another.

Finally, Mr. Polak suggested that faith in the supremacy of Law over lawlessness, of Order over chaos, of Good over evil, is an elevating, encouraging, and creative faith.

Following him spoke Dr. Suzuki, the Japanese Buddhist: Religion may be taken in many different senses. It may be expressed through forms which are as different as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism; but when it is taken in the sense of religion totality, totality religion, well, we can just as well say there is no religion as that there is nothing but religion. "In the same way I profess myself to be a Buddhist," said Dr. Suzuki, "and other people look upon me as a Buddhist, but from another point of view I am not a Buddhist, I am just as much a Christian. But what kind of a Christian I am—that depends on how you understand the word

Christian. And so I can be a believer in any form of religion. I can follow any kind of service. I can pray in any form I like. It may not be your Christianity, or your Islam, or your Buddhism. But it is mine, and I am a religious man.”



## CHAPTER TEN



### THE ISLAMIC VIEW

SHEIKH EL MARAGHI, THE VERY DISTINGUISHED RECTOR of the Al Hazar University at Cairo, which prides itself on being the oldest university in the world, was kind enough to send the Congress a paper representing the Islamic point of view. It was entitled, "*A Constructive Proposal*" and was read by his son.

Dr. Adolf Keller, of Geneva, took the Chair, and in his introductory remarks said that a great vision had been before our eyes during the Congress. We had seen men in search of God. We had seen the mysterious phenomenon which is called religion like the rolling sea stirred by some inner force,—religion after religion, wave after wave, passing by, each an effort of man's soul to achieve the beyond. Religion in all peoples is the holy discontent of man with himself, his feeling of invisible wings which are growing and carrying him higher and higher. We should be blind indeed, he said, if this Congress had not shown us that religion is a real bond between human souls, to whatever creed they may belong. This unity is the unity of our need for that Higher Power which transcends our daily experiences, our intellectual reasoning, and our mystical glimpses. It is a unity of a universal yearning in many forms, the unity of one and the same quest. We are standing on isolated islands emerging out of one and the same deep ocean of Divine mysteries. But we can speak together. Over seas which separate us we can express the separations to-day in a different way than in former times, when one religion was a

deadly enemy of the other, and when the clash meant war, persecution, and torture. Former anathemas have been silenced. The differences which still exist no more find expression in hatred and violence.

But Dr. Keller drew attention to the fact that what had brought us together was not a mere idealistic interest, but the present practical need of men who have to live together in fellowship, though that fellowship may be one of suffering, of creation, of hope and yearning before it is a fellowship of creed. "I live," he said, "in Geneva, where I have heard for many years the voices of men crying out for such fellowship in vain. We are learning in such assemblies as the League of Nations that statesmen and diplomatists cannot give us the peace for which human hearts crave. We appeal, therefore, to another world—the world of the human heart and of the spirit. In the common will to further peace and promote international relations we tend our hands to each other. And it is a particular pleasure for me to do this to a representative of the great Mosque at Cairo, through which I have so often wandered as through a strange but most interesting world."

The Rector's address was then read by his son. After saying that he had hoped to attend the Congress in person, and sending expressions of good-will and sincere wishes for the fulfilment of the great objective for which the Congress had been assembled, the Sheikh spoke first of the general idea of fellowship. He said it was a quite natural idea and had originated in primitive communities with the object of tempering the hardships of life in its simple forms. The idea grew with the development of communities till to-day, when the need of nations for one another is felt by all, it has spread so as to embrace the whole human race. It is not a philosophical hypo-

thesis : it is a natural need. Yet the elements of dissension have always accompanied this feeling. Man is not guided by reason only : he is impelled by inherent instincts of egoism, jealousy, fear and suspicion, while differences of creed and religion also cause dissension. And one is appalled at the brutal and heartless way in which evils dominate life. To overcome these factors of dissension, science and philosophy are inadequate. We must have recourse to religion. All religions have relied on the religious tendency inherent in man and have urged him to believe that the world is a harmonious whole governed by a judicious and equitable Power which observes and judges the intentions of men. And such factors in religion, involving belief in a Godhead, submission to and awareness of Him, and anticipation of His judgment, are no less important or less effective in urging man to goodness and charity than those other factors in him inciting him to evil and provoking war, greed, and the corruption of human society. Also, belief in a Life-to-come, more enduring than either the altogether good—attainable through righteousness—or the altogether evil—a natural consequence of ill-doing—brings peace and contentment to man. It is not possible to educate those who are of necessity engrossed in the earning of a bare subsistence to love good for good's sake or abhor evil because it is evil. It is simpler to have recourse to the instinctive religious tendency in man. And if this religious consciousness be deep and goodly, it is stronger than fear, greed, and the envious rivalry which provokes wars. The World Congress of Faiths and the efforts of men of religion to develop a universal fellowship are manifestations of a tendency to give the religious feeling a better direction than it had in the days of religious persecutions. That is why the Congress was

so highly gratifying to him, said the Sheikh. And in addition to striving to create a universal fellowship it fulfilled a fundamental object which has always been sought by religion and upon which Islam lays great stress: The Koran has called the attention of men to their one common parentage. It has set no value on race or on noble birth and has established a criterion for judgment—the criterion of righteousness. The Koran says :

*O men ! Verily we have created you all of Adam and Eve and we have made you into peoples and tribes that you might know one another. Verily, the most worthy of honour among you, in the sight of Allah, is the most righteous.*

And the Koran has required Muslims to act kindly towards the people of all other creeds and religions, except in the case of aggression. This charitable spirit towards the people of all religions was maintained by the Prophet Mahomed and the wise Caliphs who succeeded him. Even marriage to people of other revealed religions was allowed, complete freedom being given to the wife to practise, without restraint, the rites of her own religion.

The Sheikh then suggested that the appeal for the development of the religious consciousness should be preceded by the establishment of a fellowship between the Heads of Religions. For these Heads were in a better position than any to understand the menace threatening humanity through atheism and materialism making light of the teachings of religion and holding them up to derision. The causes which prevent the religious consciousness from playing its part in bringing people together should be removed. And in face of the swirling

currents of modernism and free thought, men of religion should co-operate to strengthen the religious consciousness and fill the souls of men with fear of God and their hearts with love of His creation. Religion should be made an effective instrument in the education of society so that the idealistic factors common to all religions might leave their mark upon human life.

With the above object in view the Sheikh went on to make definite proposals :

A. The creation of a body whose object it would be to cleanse the religious consciousness of hatred and jealousy by

- (1) imparting to the different religions that humane trend which each religion teaches.
- (2) collecting all religious ideals and proclaiming them by all means in all languages.
- (3) establishing religious propaganda on the basis of pure reason and love of truth.

And it would be a function of this body to settle in an honourable way all disputes arising from the aggression of the propagandists.

B. The creation of a body whose duty it would be to strengthen the religious consciousness, particularly in the intellectual classes.

By such means religious unity should be emphasised in word and deed and the present generation should be convinced that men of religion have no material aims or desire to govern, but are responsible for the explanation of the Divine Laws and for urging obedience to them. Then the way would be open for religions to secure universal brotherhood. Men of religion should also try to influence legislation in order that it might support the

general principles common to all religions. Unchastity should be combated, the family protected, and lying, slander, and intrigue punished—even though they do not come under the category of crime, as well as the violation of religious laws which have been ordained with a view to extirpating evil. To such efforts Islam would give its full support. For in the principles of Islam are to be found the strongest pillars on which the idea of fellowship could rest. Islam makes its appeal to reason and urges to meditation on God's creation. It exalts knowledge and learned people; urges to charity, the helping of the weak and the poor, and even kindness to animals. It fixes a portion of the wealth of the rich to be given to the poor, and considers the crime against a single individual a crime against humanity as a whole.

“In conclusion,” wrote the Sheikh, “I pray to All-Mighty Allah to aid you in your efforts for the good of humanity, to lighten you upon your way, and to guide you upon the right path.”

The Brahmachari followed, and said that unless the Sheikh had put his name to this wonderful paper it would have been impossible for him to know to which religion he belonged. “Whole-heartedly I agree with every word that he says: it is a great thing to see that a good Hindu, a good Christian, a good Muslim and a good Jew are all one and the same in their ideals and hopes,” said the Hindu monk. In regard to the constructive proposals, he said that if we knew all the medicines of all diseases we should not, when we were sick, sit down and contemplate all the medicines: we should use one particular medicine. There is no world problem. There is an individual problem. Piece together the individual, and the world is fixed up. It is in his heart that every individual must make a start.

Be as simple as a child and you will find that there are no antagonistic forces. But the term "individual" must be understood in its deepest sense. When we see ourselves deeply we find that our society, our state, and our religion are not external and super-imposed upon us, but are a true expression of our inner being. "Love thy neighbour" is not an injunction given to us by the prophets: it is an expression of our own inner self. If we are true to ourselves we cannot help loving our neighbour. Again, righteousness, morality, and truth are inherent in the nature of the universe. And when we allow ourselves to be harmoniously identified with the great process of the universe we realise our souls.

Matter, said the monk, is the outward manifestation of an underlying spirit. And of this he gave an illustration: "I am making some comments by movements of the vocal chords, which are carried by vibrations to your ear-drums where some movements occur. As physicists we can record those movements. But that is not all. I am not saying meaningless words. What I say has meaning; and what you understand has meaning. But the scientist could not find that meaning in the vibrations. It needs a mind to make the meaning and another mind to receive it. The relation between the vibration and the meaning is the same as the relation between matter and spirit. We find the world around us by sensible organs, but within and underlying it there runs a current of spirit. As our eyes are organs for sight, and our ears for hearing, so each one of us has an organ for God. Everyone has a capacity for God. And when we realise that our duty lies in developing that capacity we realise our true selves, we realise God, and inner and outer become one."

Continuing, the monk said that the realisation of our

inner being must be striven for with all our heart and soul. And in the monastery to which he belonged they had a constructive proposal for bringing unity to the world. In 1920 they had started a prayer which had been going on all day and all night without cease ever since. By this prayer they were broadcasting a spiritual vibration.

Mrs. A. Bullock, as a practical Scotswoman, suggested that groups of serious men and women in every nation should meet together in prayer as often as possible, and thereby generate a spiritual force which might be used by God where it was needed. Such prayer would be used in restraining the passions of men and in developing in us all that wise 'love which casteth out fear.'

The method she suggested was this: One minute's silence would be observed to feel the Infinite. Then the leader, different every time, might simply mention the subject chosen—possibly "The better understanding of God in the world." Then the name of each nation might be mentioned, with a pause between each for every member of the group to liberate silent prayer-force towards that nation.

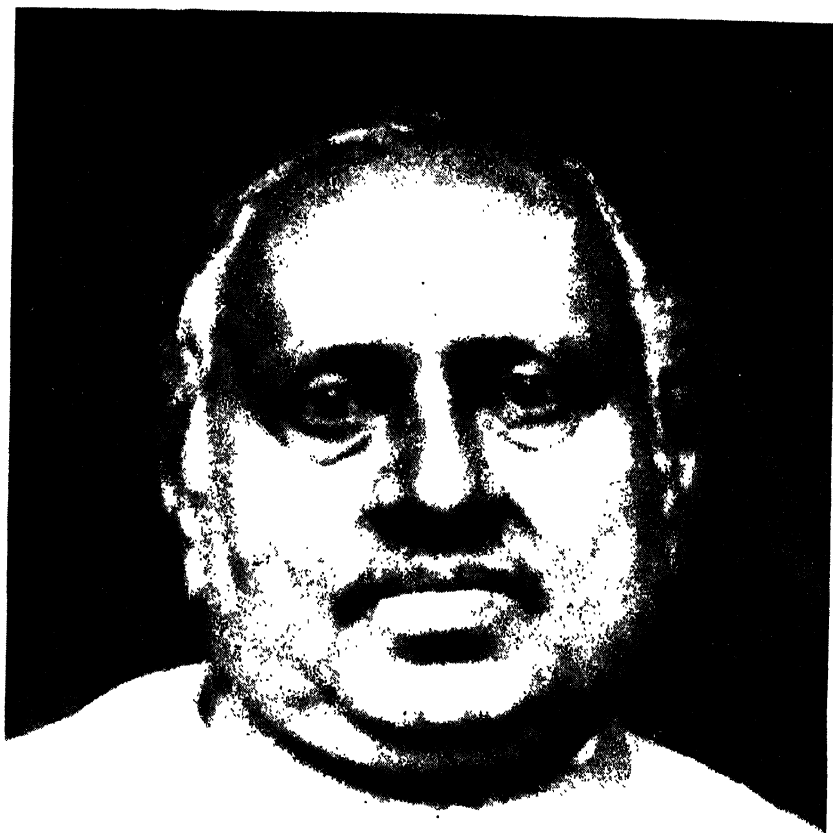
Rev. Marcus Gregory said that, as a clergyman of the Church of Abyssinia, he wished to express his sincerest thanks to the Congress for allotting part of their proceedings to that ancient Church. He suggested that this Congress should form the basis for a "League of the Religions of the World" which should find out how to elevate mankind by reverentially understanding the truth in each religion.

Dr. Hameed said that Islam meant that we do not consider the world to be the creation of the blind forces of nature, but that the whole world is governed by one Higher Purpose which passes all conception and which,



in religious terminology, we call God. The aim of life, therefore, is to imbibe the Divine qualities. And Islam does not occupy itself only with the inner life of man : rather it seeks to create one culture, a harmonious combination of spirit and matter. Indians believe only in idealism. Westerners believe only in matter. But from the middle of the world—from Syria and Arabia, have come prophets who do not want to crush either matter or spirit, but to create a world which is both spiritual and material. On this conception the whole of Islam is based. We consider human nature is good, he said ; we do not believe it is sinful. Islam also believes in democracy, in complete freedom for all nations, all races. In every human being there is a divine spark and everyone must have the fullest opportunity of letting it flame.

Pundit Lalan brought a message from a Jain high priest. He quoted a passage from the scriptures referring to the apparent disparity of instruction given by the great propounders of religious philosophies, and showed the analogy which exists between a physician who deals with physical maladies and the philosopher who deals with spiritual maladies. There is no panacea which can be applied to all and sundry without distinction of any sort. The great philosophers have many ways, but they vary them according to the grasp of the individual. To a man who seeks escape from life and bemoans its shortness, they point out the importance of the material side. To a materialist they point out the inadequacy of material things by themselves. Religion is the unification of souls with the spirit of God. “ When I address you, my fellow souls, my soul goes into your souls, and our souls are united with the Divine.”



*Art Photo Service*

PROFESSOR MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR

*Hindu*



Another very weighty exponent of the Muslim point of view was Sir Abdul Qadir. Mr. Yusaf Ali, in introducing him, said that he was distinguished not only on account of his public career but also for his position in the world of letters. He began life as Editor of a famous Urdu magazine. Then he was for a time at the Bar. Afterwards he was successively President of the Punjab Legislative Council and Judge of the High Court. He therefore brought with him a large vision and he was an embodiment of modern Muslim thought.

Sir Abdul Qadir's main contention was that the world of to-day did not realise that the foundations of its belief had been undermined by scepticism, and consequently it was suffering from doubts as to the existence of God and a life hereafter. In such conditions the Koran would serve as a beacon light, and guide erring humanity to a living belief in God. The Congress had been convened to find out how peace and good-will might be established among men. The nations had made treaties and then torn them asunder. They had advocated disarmament and ended in arming. They talk of liberty but restrict it more than ever. We must try now on the moral side. Head and heart have to combine to bring about a moral regeneration of the world. What is needed is change of hearts. This was Sir Abdul Qadir's view; and he reminded his audience that 1350 years ago a great moral change had been brought about by a holy man who claimed to be the bearer of a message to the world from its great Creator. The message, delivered in fragments, was collected together in the Holy Koran which became one of the greatest moral influences in the world. It stressed the fact that the whole of humanity is one in origin. All men derive their existence from the same Creator and all owe allegiance to Him. It was because

of this belief that there grew up among men that spirit of fellowship which has been the greatest asset of Islam through the centuries.

In the early days of Islam the Muslims also gave each other shelter and willingly shared their fortunes. They thus laid the foundation of social and economic equality. The fraternity thus established grew, in time, into a world-wide brotherhood in which the ties that bound together peoples of different countries and races were common beliefs and common ideals. Islam aimed further. It strove for a fellowship between its followers and other groups of the great human family. To Judaism and Christianity the message was : "Ye people of the Book ! come round to the word which is common between you and us." And the faiths expressly mentioned in the Koran do not exhaust the list of religions through which the truth was revealed from time to time. So the way to a better understanding between the followers of Islam and of other religions is made easier by the declaration that the essential truths underlying Islam are the same as had been previously given to the world, and all that was claimed was that Mahomed presented them in a more perfect and permanent form than before. Further, Muslims are enjoined to respect all Messengers of God and make no comparisons between them. Thus a common platform is provided for all men of good-will who believe in any of the revealed religions, and the foundation of a fellowship between them is laid. So far this has not been sufficiently utilised by the world. But it is sound enough to bear a magnificent superstructure of world-fellowship.

The Koran proceeds to emphasise the importance of peace. The words with which Muslims greet one another every day are : "Peace be with you", while the person

addressed replies : " And on you peace." Also, Muslims are commanded to have a peaceful attitude towards those whose beliefs differ from their own. Contrary to the prevalent view that Islam owed its spread to the sword is the fact that the method recommended for winning people over to it is persuasion. The Koran expressly states : " There is no compulsion in religion."

Men have arrogated to themselves an undue superiority over women, but Islam recognised the rights of women centuries ago. The status of man and woman, according to the Koran, is equal. It says : " They (women) are raiment for you, and ye (men) are raiment for them."

Turning then to questions of race and colour, Sir Abdul Qadir said that before the advent of Mahomed the Arabs were full of race consciousness ; but when he told them that in the eyes of God the best man was he who lived a good life and not he who claimed the bluest blood, his followers loyally accepted the command ; and he quoted from a recently published book by a Zoroastrian high priest : " Mahomedanism alone among the religions of the world has remained free from the colour bias. It welcomes all converts with open arms, whether they be Negroes or Pariahs . . . and receives them into its social circle as much as into its religious fold."

Narrow nationalism, another of the obstacles to world-fellowship, was also dealt with by Sir Abdul Qadir. He said that love of one's own country is part of the faith, but that the kind of nationalism which tries to make it not only an element of one's religion but even the whole of it, to the exclusion of everything else, and to the extent of embittering the minds of the people of one's own country against the people of other countries, is a magnified form of individual selfishness which is utterly repugnant to the spirit of Islam. On the other hand, Islam is a basis for

developing the right kind of nationalism which has had from its outset the spirit of internationalism in it, and seeks to minimise the chances of friction among people and to remove the causes of ill-will.

“Thus Islam,” concluded Sir Abdul Qadir, “has valuable contributions to make to the achievement of world fellowship; but its success in this direction, as also that of any of the other great Faiths of the world, depends on one essential condition, to which the world is, unfortunately, growing indifferent under the influence of modern materialism: The Koran has rightly emphasised the need of belief in the Unseen as the basis of religion and morality.”

Professor Khagendranath Maitra, in opening the debate, said that he was a Hindu, and the Hindu religion looked upon fellowship as one of its creeds. The feeling of fellowship was almost another name for the worship of God. Christianity was another religion to which the world owed much for the conception of brotherhood. The Christian virtue of charity had almost passed into a proverb. And perhaps in no other religion was there to be found in such abundant measure the spirit of definitely setting one's face against retaliation of any kind. Judaism also prepared the way for the conception of universal brotherhood by asserting man's claim to a common descent from Adam. All these religions therefore pointed in the same direction. At the same time we must admit that, though they may derive their inspiration from one source, they are yet different from one another; and there are still strifes and feuds, wars and discords. This must be acknowledged. But sooner or later the synthesis must come. “And we as Hindus,” added the Professor, “bow to the ideals of Islam—the

ideal of personal purity, the ideal of avoiding all intoxicating drinks, and the prohibition of usury. The followers of Islam have gone further than the members of any other religion in the practical application of the principles of equality and fraternity. The rich and the poor, the king and the cobbler—all have equal status the moment they enter the fold of Islam. Islam, which is practised by millions of my countrymen, has been able to show an entire disregard of colour and race. When this good-will comes amongst mankind, the different religions will appear like a beautiful mosaic in which none will lose its colour and the whole pattern will be a source of joy to all.”

Dr. Ahmeed said that to him Islam meant the Eternal Life. It was nothing new. It was nothing old. It was the law which governed the universe. And when he spoke on Islam he did not speak as a Mahomedan. Muslims did not call themselves Mahomedans: they called themselves Muslims, which meant that they believed in complete submission to God. And everybody, whether he be Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian, who submitted himself completely to the will of God, was a Muslim. It was good to pay compliments to each other about the broad-mindedness of Islam and the tolerance of Hinduism: but we must tackle world problems as practical men. We required a great change; and a fundamental change could only come through religion—the Eternal religion which goes to the very depth of human thought. So far as the inner life of this universe was concerned, there was one thing on which Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Judaists could all combine, and that was the idea of God. And by God he meant not the God of the Hindus, or the God Who is only Immanent, or the God Who is only Transcendent, but



God as the highest idea and the ultimate Source of all our spiritual life and all our spiritual strivings. A second thing which was found in all the religions was the idea of the immortality of the soul. On these two fundamental conceptions all the religions of the world could unite.

Mrs. Hjordis Davies said she had come from Norway to represent a Norwegian sociologist and psychologist of the mass-soul, Mr. Brockmann, who since the Great War had been studying the deeper reasons for war. It was not enough, he thought, to consider the Gospels of Christ as spoken only to man as an individual : they must be considered as addressed also to men as a collective being, as belonging to a group, a nation, or a race. Brockmann notices that the Commandments, usually thought of as applicable to individuals, are set aside in dealing with collective life. *Thou shalt not kill* may apply to individuals, but in a nation killing becomes a virtue. "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*" may be applicable to an individual, but political parties send out false witness with impunity. He therefore sees in organisation wrongly used a stumbling block in the way of civilisation. As collective sin has become authorised, the organisations which countenance it should be tabooed. The reason why it has happened is that, while our imagination has the chance of working along the lines of the Way, the Truth and the Life, it also runs the risk of working along lines out of accord with them. And some have worked on wrong lines. The evils of to-day are due to wrong orientation of life. We should therefore take Christ as our mental Saviour. A living community should be built on personal liberty. As man is born in accordance with the Divine Law he is originally good, and his true self-activity should be allowed to

develop. In such a community each one's weal should be the weal of all, and the weal of all should be the weal of each.

Mr. Yusaf Ali, summing up the debate, said the first Muslim was Adam; and Abraham, Jesus, and all the Prophets were Muslims because they preached the submission of our will to the will of God. Dr. Ahmeed had rightly pointed out that Islam is not so much a separate religion as a re-statement of the law of God, the law of the universe, the law of our being. "At least in human fellowship," pleaded Mr. Yusaf Ali, "we Muslims have set an example. We have failed to live up to much of the teaching of our Prophet, but in this one particular we can say humbly that we have acted up to his spirit. The Islamic brotherhood is a true reality. If we realise that, then we shall also follow our Norwegian friend who spoke of collective sin. A man may live a very pure life but he may also be responsible for collective sin. So we must constantly wage war against evil. And such a war is what is meant when we use that much misunderstood word, *Jihad*."

## CHAPTER ELEVEN



### THE BAHAI VIEW

SPRINGING OUT OF ISLAM HAS ARISEN WHAT HAS COME TO be known as the Bahai Movement : and the present Head of the Movement, Shoghi Effendi, was good enough to have a statement composed on his behalf for the Congress. Sir Herbert Samuel presided over the Session at which it was read and in his introductory remarks gave a brief account of the origin of the Movement, with the Heads of which he became well acquainted during his term of office as High Commissioner of Palestine.

He said that if we had to choose from among the many religious communities of the world that one which was closest in its aim to this Congress, we should choose the Bahai community. For the Bahai faith exists for almost the sole purpose of contributing to the fellowship and unity of mankind. Other communities might consider how far a particular element of their respective faiths could be regarded as similar to those of other communities. But the Bahai faith aimed at combining into one synthesis all those elements in the various faiths which are held in common.

The community originated in Persia, where a certain mystic prophet who took the name of the Bab (the gate) began a mission among the Persians in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. His activities were regarded with apprehension by the Government of Persia, and finally he and his leading disciples were seized and shot in the year 1850. Yet in spite of persecution the Movement spread in Persia and other Islamic countries, and

the Bab was succeeded by one who became its principal prophet and exponent—Bahauallah, who made it his life mission to spread the creed which he claimed to have received by direct divine revelation. He died in 1892, and was succeeded by his son, Abdul Baha, who died in 1921. His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, who came to England and was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, but who now lives at Haifa, is the present Head of the community which has now some eight hundred daughter-communities in various countries all over the world.

The statement, which was entitled “Bahauallah’s Ground Plan of World Fellowship”, was then read: Without a keener spirituality, a loftier and firmer faith in the Universal Father, mankind will never discover the way out of its troubles. Only through the initiative of religion will humanity be rescued from dissension and united in a fellowship of hearts. His Plan, therefore, is grounded on the belief that nothing less than a concerted effort on a world-scale, with the spiritual energies of mankind informing its practical energies, will suffice to awaken the spirit of fellowship and secure deliverance from danger. And the sense of fellowship must be broad-based on the whole of our human nature, spiritual, moral, and intellectual. What up till now has been lacking is clearness of spiritual vision. But if we look within we shall see that a new power is developing—a new power of mastering our troubles. Man’s conscience has become more sensitive, his spirit more responsive to heavenly promptings. As he is to-day endowed with a new degree of intellectual power, so also is he endowed with a new degree of spiritual power. New ideals, new hopes, new dreams of further progress, bear witness to man’s consciousness of growth. Men had turned from the saints, mystics, and seers and listened to secular

philosophers. The gates of world-brotherhood opened wide : men turned away. They have now to turn for fellowship and peace to the way they have not trodden : the way of religion. But all must tread this way together. And, since the whole world as a unit is involved, the ideals which are to guide the movement must be given quite definite shape : vague sentiments of good-will cannot suffice. Some explicit agreement on principles will be required.

Realising this necessity, Bahau'llah had long ago worked out a set of fundamental principles. The burden of the whole scheme was laid ultimately upon the shoulders of each individual man and woman. The principle of individual responsibility was thus to be the basis of all progress. But underneath this lay something deeper yet. The living rock on which the foundation was to be laid was the rock of Truth. If this age is to become the age of universal brotherhood it must be the age of Knowledge and of Truth. The Truth will set us free ; the Truth will make us one. Our estrangements are chiefly due to prejudice. Through the search for Truth mankind will at last become clearly conscious of the essential unity of the human race, and from the full knowledge of this unity there will be born a spirit of world fellowship adequate for the present emergency. The difference between the world religions has been made the cause of estrangement and strife. But there is nothing in these differences which should produce so sad a result. Indeed, there is an important aspect in which all religions are one. A religion does not consist solely of doctrine and an institution : it is also a spiritual atmosphere. Members of all religions have an outlook, an experience, an obligation which they share in common with one another in spite of their special and distinctive

loyalties. The more intensely spiritual men are, the more vividly conscious are they of the reality of this communion. In their profounder teaching, also, the world-religions show forth this fundamental unity. They all affirm the love of God for his creatures. The mystical experience is another example of it. The fellowship among all mystics—among these men and women of mystical genius whose impassioned devotion to their God is the feature of their lives—is common knowledge of which evidence is within the reach of all. It is by the less mystically minded votaries of a religion that the contrast between it and its sister-religions is most acutely insisted on. Thus do saints join in testifying that the great religions have their aspect of unity as well as their aspect of variety, and that, without qualifying their special allegiance, worshippers in all religions may find something in the fundamental nature of religion itself which promotes a precious and abiding sense of true companionship. Thus the promotion of a boundless spirit of concord and good-will Bahauallah maintained to be agreeable to the genius of every religion.

Another effort at harmonisation was called for when Bahauallah included in his scheme an active partnership between religion and science. Science divorced from religion gives a wholly distorted view of reality. Religion divorced from science may become a mere superstition. Also, the establishment of laws to prevent extremes of opulence and indigence and to introduce universal education, a common language, and a central World-Tribunal, was recommended. And in these and all other reforms man's greatest stay would be the Holy Spirit, without whose aid no fellowship would ever be secured.

What has so far been lacking, he felt, is religious insight. And if, now, religiously minded men and women

are to leaven the world with the spirit of fellowship, they must be possessed of the invincible assurance that under God the whole movement of evolution is with us in this endeavour, that no difficulty can ever stem the onward march of Heaven's purpose, that within man's soul to-day are ample powers to win all that we desire.

Mrs. Charles Bishop said that in all ages, amid all religions, the saints and mystics had found themselves in accord, thus bearing out the words of Jesus: "He that doeth my will shall know my doctrine." Understanding is promised to those who practise. So, among those who have practised the teaching of their religion, whatever it may be—some have found themselves members of one great spiritual community. On the other hand, those who have been content with the material law of their faith have found themselves in antagonism.

Rev. A. Porter, D.D., a Congregational Minister, dwelt on the necessity for a new text-book on Missions that could be developed out of this Congress and placed in the hands of those groups in the various Churches who were studying missions. But such a text-book should be written from the standpoint of an appreciation, and not as mere propaganda. There was a further need for a devotional manual compiled from the devotional literature of all the great religions of the world, and to be used as responsive reading in our Churches. He would himself feel quite free to use such a manual, and he was sure his own congregation would welcome it. A third suggestion he made was that another manual should be prepared for use in our Sunday Schools. It should contain little stories from the great religious teaching, and creeds should be shown in the form of drama. From his experience as secretary for religious

education in eight states in the United States, he could say that these proposals would fill a real need.

Dr. D. N. Maitra said that he had that very year visited the mausoleum on Mount Carmel, and twenty-five years ago he had spoken at a Bahai Meeting in London. So he was interested in the Bahai cause. But he would wish to speak on a similar movement in India,—the Brahmo Somaj—which had not been properly represented at the Congress. According to their scripture God had said : “ For the preservation of righteousness I take the human form from time to time and descend upon the earth.” That is the best interpretation of incarnation. In every country from time to time, said Dr. Maitra, a man has been born as a creation of the age whom we call a saint, or a prophet. Jesus he held as a great teacher of moral law and the leader of an ideal life. In the Trust Deed of the Somaj building it is laid down that it should be available as a place of meeting “ for the worship and adoration of the eternal, unsearchable and immutable Being who is Author and Preserver of the universe ” . . . “ and for the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the extending of the bond of union between men of all religions, persuasions and creeds.”

Madame Barry-Orlova said that, according to Bahaulah, only through awakening and rebirth can we know God : to deny one’s prophet is to deny all prophets. If you are a Muslim and say : “ I do not believe in Jesus,” you do not believe in Mahomed. Bahaulah said : “ The lands are many. The light is one. Speed ye from your sepulchres.”

M. Gabriel Gobron, a French Buddhist, put in a word for a new religion which was renovated Buddhism. This new faith already numbered one million adherents, but



was not yet officially recognised. It welcomed Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism. The wonders of these were venerated equally with those of Jesus Christ. This renovated Buddhism was essentially the reconciliation of races and peoples through the achievement of religious unity.

Mr. R. P. Pandya supported the idea of preparing text-books which would play their part in uniting the thoughts of all. At present there is not much known of the various religions, he said. Unless we know something about them we cannot have a fellowship of faiths.

Mr. Parikh, of Baroda, differed from those who saw no use in Congresses such as this. Not only was he hopeful of its future possibilities, but he believed that it had already established a feeling of world-fellowship—a unity with God and brotherhood of men, in the hearts of those present. If it were not so, how could he stand on that platform in simple Indian hand-spun attire? Complete union with God—the supreme goal of all religions and the birthright of every human being—was attained only by a few. For the vast multitude heaven must be brought to earth. To Hindus like himself, religion was not something superimposed : it permeated all good aspects of life. Economics and politics were nothing but expressions of religion in practical life. Unless we could bring bread and butter as well as love, light and freedom to the masses, our fellowship would be useless.

## CHAPTER TWELVE



### THE JEWISH VIEW

FOR PROFESSOR MAGNES' ADDRESS, WHICH WAS ENTITLED "*The Spirit of Peace and the Spirit of War*", Professor H. Wood, Director of Studies of the Friends' Woodbrooke Settlement, took the Chair. Referring to the anti-Semitic feeling, he said that it was a very real danger, and not only to the welfare of the Jewish people but to the honour and character of our civilisation. Continuing, he said that in the realm of peace and war we cannot avoid an ethical judgment, and this raises for us our ultimate conception of the nature of God. We were met to bear common witness to the sense of the Sacred as an essential part of human nature, to bear common witness to the reality of something beyond man and nature—the object of our reverence and loyalty. We may not be agreed in all that we hold true about the nature of that reality. But the ultimate question of peace and war, the spirit of peace and the spirit of war, depends on what we believe to be true about God. Is the universe friendly? Are we living in a reassuring environment? God is both power and love: which do you think is final? On the answer to that question depends the possibility of subordinating the spirit of war to the spirit of peace.

Dr. Magnes not being able to be present at the Congress owing to the troubles in Palestine, his paper was read by Mr. Edgar.

Dr. Magnes (President of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem) spoke in a tone of pessimism of "preparing

a lowly fellowship of the spirit for use during the coming war." War was the true test of any faith. Would it be possible to make fellowship real during war? The whole world would soon be at war. The scoffer asks: "Is there a God? Or is He without power?" Yet there are numbers who say with longing: "My soul thirsteth for a living God." And the clear answer of Israel, with its unparalleled experience among the nations, has always been: He neither sleepeth nor slumbereth. World-fellowship during war means fellowship with an enemy, and patriotism hates this. The resister of war is thrown into chains. What is right in times of peace is thought to be wrong in times of war. Until we can all, victors and vanquished, say of the past war that we have sinned and transgressed, there is no hope for us. There can be no such thing as a righteous war: war begets more self-righteousness than anything else. We are so poor of mind and character that despite all our power we know of no other way than the use of force in conducting international relations. At this very moment we are preparing for the coming war. "Are we making a supreme effort to avert it," he asked, "through contrition, renunciation, justice, mercy—through fellowship in anything but name, through fellowship that requires sacrifice?"

We could also establish a humble fellowship through religion, if we sought to share the spiritual experiences of the conscientious objectors to war. With them above all we could establish a fellowship of the Holy Spirit. They were the true worshippers of the God within them and above them, by whatever name they called Him.

Summing up, Dr. Magnes said that the minimum possibilities of fellowship he would suggest would be

(1) a fellowship of those who seek a living God, even though they do not find Him; (2) the fellowship of those who think no war is righteous; (3) the fellowship of those who, through abhorrence of war and a belief in the possibility of man's salvation without it, are ready to sacrifice liberty and life in worship of their God.

Dr. William Brown, the eminent practising psychologist, in opening the discussion said that Dr. Magnes' challenging paper was a good illustration of the problem of the relationship between science and ethics. Ethics alone were not going to save us. Mere moral vapourings would not help us. If we were out to stop war we must make preparations on the basis of science,—remembering that the psychology of the mind was a science just like physics or chemistry. But psychology would have to co-operate with the other sciences and with religion and ethics. He did not agree with the pessimists who said that war was inevitable. But if we were to stop war we should have to tackle the spirit of war underneath the surface of the mind.

Pacifism, Dr. Brown said, was all right ethically—but only right if it could be completely carried through; and it could not be carried through if one was consistent. To be a consistent pacifist would mean that one could not avail oneself of any advantage accruing from the defence by others of what one held most dear. He was not himself a pacifist. He had taken part in the last war. But he regarded war as stupid, and as evidence of how little civilised we really were. At present, he said, we are in a dangerous position. And when the danger is deadly the attitude of mind should be calm. We must have armaments at the present time. We have tried the disarmament process and it has failed. True, from the point

of view of absolute ethics there should be no armies, navies, or police at all. No one can feel completely happy unless he knows that everyone is obeying moral laws without external interference or compulsion. But things are not like that. Absolute ethics are an abstraction from the facts of real life. Life has developed by the natural struggle for existence, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest. Our life is the final outcome of a long process of evolution, and there are mental forces corresponding to the structure and functioning of our nervous system that take us back thousands and millions of years and are still working. Thus we have a strong self-assertive tendency. Men do not recognise it because they keep it in subjection. Yet if instead of keeping it in the subconscious they would sublimate it, that is, bring it to the surface, it would be beneficial both to individuals and nations. Our very powerful mental ancestry—our primitive tendencies—should not be repressed but brought out, so that we can make use of them for higher purposes. Primitive mental forces should be directed to higher work. And as with individuals so with nations: their self-assertive tendencies should be turned from cutting across one another to moving upwards towards something higher. National tendencies should be sublimated towards supernational ideals. And by ideals he did not mean illusions. Much so-called religion is illusion, but real religion is a matter of ideals. An ideal is something which is not in actual life: Truth is an ideal. It is never realised, yet it is real for God—for the totality of things. So also with beauty and goodness.

Dr. Brown recommended his audience to get the power, then use it. He quoted the philosopher Butler: "Had I strength as I have right, had I power as I have

manifest authority, I would absolutely govern the world." We must have power, and if the wrong people get it we must see that their power is neutralised by other power. Psychology should be taught in all the schools. The next generation should have people trained in its practical side. As they know all about the inside of a motor car, so should they know about the minds of people. Referring in conclusion to the Congress, he as a scientist would say that of the many movements of its kind which were going on, this was easily the most scientific.

Mr. Hutchinson Harris, continuing the discussion, said that Dr. Brown had referred to the need for politicians to be psychologists ; but there could be no greater practical exponents of psychology than politicians. And in regard to Dr. Brown's stress on the need for power, the will to power was the very spirit which led to war. He believed that Spengler was quite right in saying that the will to power must inevitably lead to barbarism. Again, Dr. Brown had said that the death of the individual was a biological necessity for the species. Mr. Harris claimed that the death of civilisation was equally necessary for progress. Solitary prophets were absolutely alone in face of the will to power. Yet in the future civilisation Christ and not Nero was our brother.

Mr. Branson suggested that Jesus was the first and the greatest psychologist. He saw that religion ought not to tell a man that he was born in sin, so he said : " You are a child of God." He urged that a man should live up to his heritage and set an example : " What I can do you can do." The paper that had been read was defeatist. But the whole attitude of Jesus was positive. He said : " Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Professor Parikh wished to emphasise the spiritual significance of the non-violent civil passive resistance of Mahatma Gandhi. It is best if we can resist without hitting, without hating, without animosity.

Frau Schulz-Gavernitz said one great question came out of the address : Should the Church say Amen to the actions of the State ? Dr. Magnes said the Church should not, because the State was always unrighteous, always acted by force. She thought this a very dangerous theory for citizens of the biggest Empire and wielders of the greatest material power to hold. Christ said : " Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's "—give to the Roman State that which belonged to it. And the Roman State had been the model for most of the civilised States in Europe, all of whom aimed at justice, order and peace among the nations. So she argued that the Bishops, the Mullahs, and the Rabbis were quite right when they acknowledged this and said Amen, though they ought not to say Amen because it is the State : they should only say it when the State is upholding peace and order and trying to better the world.

Mrs. Naomi Mitchison agreed with Dr. Magnes that force was not righteousness : on the other hand Dr. Brown had made out a very good case for the police force. Yet she could not quite agree with him. She had been in a police charge and had realised that even a police force can be completely violent and completely unscrupulous. She could not see how there could be peace in the world until we have real world brotherhood, and that would mean the end of the competitive system, with its constant wrangle for markets, its rival imperialisms and such-like things which make for war. We must be prepared to be means so that ultimately the kingdom of ends may come. Yet we must realise that it will not come

in our time. All we can hope for ourselves is that we may be thesis and contra-thesis so that in the end the synthesis may come.

Miss Edith Ellis of the Society of Friends said that during the Great War she had been a secretary supporting the conscientious objectors ; and her work in that direction had eventually taken her to prison. But there they had with them another Power. Dr. Brown might be right from a psychological point of view, and those who believe in war might be right in fighting even if they felt that it was on a lower level. But there was also this Higher Power which was with the conscientious objectors. And she claimed that the lesson in brotherhood she learned from them and in Holloway prison she could not have learned anywhere else. Since the War she had been trying to do something constructive, because she quite agreed that negative pacifism was not what we needed. She had been in close touch with the League of Nations, and what she felt the world needed now was a profounder spiritual sense. We should seek to bring about a deeper brotherhood and aid the League to function on a higher plane.

Professor Wood, in closing the meeting, said that Dr. Brown's claims for psychology were not at all exaggerated, but in that session we were dealing with a problem which was ultimately religious and ethical : and the power we were looking for might be the power-conscience of which Butler spoke—the power which would help us to be loyal to our religious faith. He emphasised that what we did depended entirely on our view of the nature of God and on the loyalty called forth by that view. If our religion were an illusion, then the sooner we got rid of it the better. But if we were in touch with reality, then a certain obligation would



rest upon us that we could not escape. Our duty and loyalty would not be to the State, though we could not just put the State over there as belonging to evil. Our ultimate loyalty would be to that other country of which Cecil Spring Rice sang in his well-known poem,—that other country

“ Whose ways are ways of gentleness,  
And all her paths are peace.”

The Kingdom of God is not going to be realised hereafter, said Mr. Wood. It is something to which we may belong here and now. Those who belong to it are in the ranks of the peace-makers, and there is no other citizenship that is ultimate.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN



### A CONFUCIAN VIEW

MR. S. I. HSIUNG, AUTHOR OF "LADY PRECIOUS STREAM", said that though he was educated in the Confucian School entirely in the old Confucian way, he feared that to speak on Confucianism in a language which was not Chinese would be speaking out of tune. Many of the subtle qualities of the sayings would be lost. At the start he would say that in China people are not particularly religious in the strict sense of the word. They worship Confucius, Buddha, and Lao Tse, the Taoist leader. Thus the faith of the people is catholic and comprehensive. But there are two universal gods: Ch'ang Huang the city god, and Tu Ti the village god. These are the native gods who guard the home and the earth where we are living. It was Confucianism which spiritualised the earth; it was Taoist mysticism which personified the individual god, and it was Buddhism which assigned to them their individual functions. Buddhism was imported from India; Taoism and Confucianism were native products of China, the former having been started about 600 B.C. by Lao Tse, who was the teacher of Confucius. The difference between the two is that Taoism is a kind of professional religion, while Confucianism is more in the nature of a philosophy. In the year 1410 A.D. the Emperor made an order that the Temples of Confucius should be called the Temples of Literature. But in 1914, under the Republic—it being deemed that the greatness of Confucius was not limited to literature or any sort of art, and that nothing

but the name of Confucius could express it—their title was changed to “Confucian Temple”. After Confucius came Mencius, who preached the doctrine of putting the nation foremost of all. He laid emphasis on kindness and worship, and thought that all people born into the world were good.

A well-known book of Confucius, he said, is named the *Golden Mean*, and this teaches that men must not go to extremes. There the Chinese call the Japanese Orientals and Europeans Occidentals, and themselves the Middle Kingdom. Confucius himself was a kind, good, temperate man. He had said: “A gentleman should not look for comfort, but be energetic in service and careful in speech, and correct mistakes through example.” He did not claim to be a creator—only a transmitter. His wonderful teachings he considered only to be good examples of the ancient sages. His only ambition was to perfect himself and follow the good. He said that when three persons were walking together there was always at least one who was fit to be his teacher and he would follow that one’s good conduct and correct his own mistakes. He also taught much about governing a country. “The ruler rules, the minister ministers, the father fathers, the son sons.” If the king employs his ministers with courtesy, and the ministers serve the king with loyalty, the fundamental rule of government is fulfilled. A good king should be respectable in his conduct, respectful in serving his superiors, and righteous in employing his people. Also the ruler should be upright himself, and then he need not give commands: whatever he wished would be done. But if he were not upright, then he might give any number of orders but none would be carried out. In his sayings about justice Confucius differed somewhat from Christ, said Mr.

Hsuing. Christ taught men to turn the other cheek to those who struck. But when Confucius was asked if we should return good for evil he replied : " If you return good for evil, what would you return for good ? The best way is to return good for good, and justice for bad." In seeing things we must be clear, in hearing things we must be sharp, in our countenance we must be kind, in our demeanour respectful, and in our speech sincere. Of one of his students he said he was a man who could enjoy himself with a bowl of rice and a cup of water, and living in a mean street where others were miserable he could be happy. Confucius seldom mentioned the supernatural. He sometimes spoke of heaven, but with a kind of resignation. " We pay great respect to the spirits and the gods, but we must try to keep away from them." Many of his teachings, said Mr. Hsuing, were very like the teachings of Christ. There was only one aim : To be a good man. Confucius said : " All men are brothers." We have everything in common. We love to be good : we hate to be bad.

Rev. R. G. Griffiths, who had been a missionary in China, led the debate on Mr. Hsuing's address. He said that one of the great characteristics of the Chinese people was their love of peace. Anyone who had ever been in close contact with the Chinese and had come—even if only superficially—to understand their culture, could not help being astonished at the great moral principles which were daily manifested by the people from highest to lowest. The teachings of Confucius had passed into their very fibre. But there was a great contrast between what the Indians emphasised and what the Chinese emphasised—the first stressed " the strictly religious or spiritual side " and the second " the strictly moral and ethical side." Again, when we contrasted the teaching

of Confucius with the teaching of the great Jewish law-giver, Moses, we saw that the former advised the people, while respecting the denizens of heaven, to have as little as possible to do with them ; whereas the latter began his code of law with " God said." The laws of Moses began with God ; and God was there not as an abstract conception but as a Person. And Mr. Griffiths, speaking as a clergyman of the Church of England, felt that there was a definite lack of spirituality in the outlook of the Chinese race under the guidance of Confucius. He suggested that the Congress as a whole bore witness to the need of that spiritual basis for life which would keep mankind on the paths of happiness, peace, fellowship, love, and—in the highest and noblest sense—progress. He would go further and say boldly that he believed that there were many in the mighty nation of China to whom that Christian body in which he had been brought up had a message. Might it not be that if Confucius had lived later he might have found in the message which came through Jesus—the Man who was Divine and manifested the Divinity which was potential in the rest of the world—an answer to some of those questions which to him were unanswered ?

Rev. C. E. Storrs had come all the way from Australia, and felt that if he did not say something he would go back ashamed. Whatever came out of the Congress by way of fresh organisation, nothing was likely to be so fruitful as gingering up the organisations we already had—the Churches and other bodies. We ought to be brothers. We ought to have peace. This was the burden of every speech from every pulpit. But we could not have brotherhood or peace without some fundamental belief in Providence and in spirit working in man, and in " life after death ".

Madame Shahani said we had heard about fellowship. We had also heard about what, in each creed, was likely to bring us closer together. But we had been shown only one side of the mirror : the differences had been passed over. In fact there were fundamental differences between Christianity and Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, and no amount of fine words and pleasant epithets would alter that fact when we began to reason. So she suggested that the differences should be openly stressed without fear. She gave an example of the benefit which came from this frank recognition of differences ; her husband was a Hindu and she herself was French. Yet they had always been good comrades, not because they did not recognise the differences that existed between their respective spiritual make-ups, but because they respected these differences in each other and tried to transcend them in something rich and fine. That was the problem for the Congress, too. As a great philosopher once said : “ Out of disharmony let us make a sweet melody.”

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN



### THE PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW

THE POINT OF VIEW OF A SCIENTIFIC MAN WHO WAS ALSO a philosopher was given in a paper written just before his death by the late Dr. J. S. Haldane, the noted physiologist.

Dr. Cyril Bailey, the Public Orator at Oxford, and an old friend of the late Professor Haldane, said that the relation of religions was one of vital importance in any and every study of religion. Ultimately all knowledge is one, but it can never be grasped as one by any human being. Science and religion deal primarily with different spheres of knowledge. Science deals with the phenomena that are known to us through the senses. Philosophy and religion deal with that which lies behind the senses and can be grasped by thought but is not in the same way susceptible of inductive proof. Fifty years ago a discussion like that about to be held would have been violent and combative. Religion was then insisting on the literal truth of tradition and repudiating the conclusions of science ; while science was claiming to be the only truth. To-day we are feeling our way towards a clearer understanding of the relations of religion and science.

The paper to be read, said Dr. Bailey, was of very special value to us, because Dr. Haldane, who always stressed the necessity of some religious belief beyond the conclusions of science, wrote it a few days before his death. It was probably the last thing that he ever put to paper. Always with practical and scientific interests in

mind, he was devoted to the philosophy which lies behind it all and insisted on the necessity of religion.

Dr. Haldane's paper was read by his daughter, Mrs. Naomi Mitchison. In this paper the main contention was, briefly, that materialism is not enough: that the world is spiritual in nature. To the materialist religion is necessarily no more than an illusion based on ignorance. But in Dr. Haldane's view materialism forms no basis for honesty, charity, regard for truth, loyalty, or art; and religion is the most important human interest.

His argument was this: There appears to be both a physical and a spiritual world, since, besides the physical world, human experience and behaviour seem to reveal to us a spiritual world in which good and bad have a meaning. The distinction between what ought and what ought not to be is generally acknowledged, together with the obligation to further what ought to be. And, in his view, it is on the recognition of this obligation that the religions of the world are founded. There can be no doubt, he says, as to the practical usefulness of regarding our universe in the manner of physical science. If we disregard the fact of life, and of our own relations to the universe around us, it undoubtedly seems to behave in the way that physicists assume. But Haldane was a physiologist, his whole business in life was to study life. He would not therefore disregard it so lightheartedly in studying the universe to which he belonged. So he goes on to say that the development of modern philosophy has shown that such an interpretation of the universe as is revealed to us by our senses only is not one on which we can finally rest. Our experience is of life. The experience of an individual implies unity in the sense that, throughout the details of his experience, what we call his life tends to be maintained. What might appear to be



mere unco-ordinated events tend to be actually so co-ordinated or integrated that our life is maintained in a specific manner. In contrast with a mere physical and chemical interpretation nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which the events in and around us which constitute nutrition, respiration, excretion, circulation of blood, regulation of bodily temperature, and innumerable nervous and other activities, are so co-ordinated or integrated that what we regard as a normal life is maintained and reproduced. This integration, he thinks, is just as much present in all of what we can see with our eyes or touch with our fingers, as in events within our own bodies. In everything we can directly see and feel we find the same integrative maintenance. This is demonstrably true of our experience of brightness, colour, resistance, and relative position. Hence all our experience must be regarded as an experience of life. And he emphasises the fact that it is over the *whole* of our experience that the conception of life applies. The most recent developments of physical science are pointing towards the existence of what is organic in the apparently inorganic world. He is utterly opposed to the common supposition that life arose from "matter". To assume that life originated from inorganic conditions as we at present ordinarily interpret them is, he says, unintelligible and meaningless, since life, which implies integration, is something wholly different from physically interpreted existence, which excludes integration.

Haldane then takes a step further. Our experience is not merely of life, but, in addition, of conscious behaviour. And conscious behaviour implies both foresight and retrospect. There is more than blind maintenance of life: there is conscious maintenance of what we call personality. At the same time the surrounding

world becomes a world of objects and events, each of which has its place in the active maintenance of personality. And there is something still higher, which is revealed to us through our regard for truth, beauty, and goodness of conduct.

Dealing first with our regard for truth, he says that science and philosophy seek after what we look upon as truth, independent of mere individual interest. Truth he defines as what is consistent with the experience of all men. And active search after truth of any kind involves the co-ordinated foresight and retrospect which are characteristic of personality. Apart from personality, truth has no meaning. Hence the search after truth which appeals to all men implies the existence of personality extending over and including all individual personalities. In other words, it implies all-embracing personality, which for religious interpretation is the personality of God. In the furtherance of truth as revealed in experience of any kind God, as the supreme Person, is revealed to us, and our trust in experience is trust in God.

Beauty, continues Dr. Haldane, is likewise something which, since it involves co-ordinated foresight and retrospect, has no meaning apart from personality, and which at the same time applies to all men. And beauty not only embodies personality, but personality which is independent of man's individual personality, and which we can always find when we look for it. In the experience and furtherance of beauty the personality of God appears in us.

Turning then to goodness, Dr. Haldane says that the fact is revealed to us that the interest of others is bound up with our own individual interests. Honesty, charity, take precedence over mere individual interests. But as

they involve both co-ordinated foresight and retrospect, they have no meaning apart from personality. And interest which extends over all individual interests is nothing less than a revelation in us of all-pervading personality, or God.

Religion, therefore, seems to him to be essentially our recognition of God as supreme Personality through the recognition of the sacred character of goodness in conduct, truth and beauty. And if we enquire why we should have such regard for goodness, truth, and beauty, we find that this regard is part of our inmost selves, though not of ourselves as mere individuals.

Dealing briefly with the question of suffering and evil, he says that personality is an active supersession of blind maintenance which we regard as mere life. Both life and personality imply the existence of what is at the same time being superseded. And when we consider religion we also find that the existence of God as active Personality would be without meaning apart from the existence of imperfection. God is present everywhere in the universe of our experience, and for religion the course of evolution must be regarded not as something taking place apart from God but as the progressive manifestation of God. And our faith in the reality of the universe is part of our faith in God.

But if the religions of the world are to come closer together, they must discard much that is in reality unessential or misleading in their respective features, and lay more stress on what is essential. And they have a common basis in the recognition of the spiritual reality manifested in man's regard for what is good in conduct, true, and beautiful.

Dr. Haldane does not regard belief in miraculous events of any kind as forming an essential part of religion.



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SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

*Hindu*



On the other hand he views with disapproval the separation of what is looked upon as religious from other experience into which religion ought to enter at every point. Thus, regard for truth, including regard for actual experience in religious work, regard for and appreciation of beauty, and regard for fellow-men and animals in every variety of right and kindly action, he would look upon as constituting different aspects of religion. For God is present to us in any of our thoughts and deeds, and there are no artificial barriers between ourselves and God.

His view of immortality was that though death comes to all of us—and it came to him only a week or two after these words were written—yet in so far as God is present in us we are immortal, since God is immortal, and in face of death we can rest in God. A belief in individual immortality is not a necessary part of religion.

Dealing in conclusion with the special subject of the Congress—the promotion of a spirit of fellowship, he said that for real mutual understanding between nations an understanding and respect for the special forms which religion takes among them seems to be essential. Many Christians entertain the ideal of converting non-Christian peoples to Christianity. A much higher ideal, he thought, was to understand and enter into sympathy with the religions which exist in other countries and use this understanding and sympathy as a basis for higher religion. In so far as they do so, Christians will necessarily discard more and more of what is unessential or misleading in their own religious beliefs, and concentrate on what is essential. With mutual understanding of different forms of religious belief, the differences between Eastern and Western civilisations will tend to disappear. In mathematical and physical science there is already

little or no difference in what is believed by different nations. Religion is a far more difficult matter. But Dr. Haldane could see no ultimate reason why, in matters of religion, similar agreement should not be reached, and he hoped that the Congress would act as a powerful influence in this direction.

Dr. Joseph Needham regretted that he differed from Dr. Haldane in many of his views. His chief count against him was that Dr. Haldane failed to distinguish between the various kinds of materialism. Most of his argument had been against mechanistic materialism whereas, according to Dr. Needham, there was a variety known as dialectic materialism which accepted the existence in the universe of diverse levels of complication and interpreted these as successive levels of organisation and order having their own laws. Dr. Haldane's mistake was that of identifying religion with metaphysics, or combining the two. One of the most impressive facts of the present day, Dr. Needham said, is that there is going on a persecution parallel to that of the Early Church—a persecution of men and women who hold the doctrine of love of their neighbour in a more thorough-going manner than it has been held for a long time. These are the members of the Communist Party. Their doctrine, in Dr. Needham's view, might be described as the highest form which religion has yet taken, and a form in which it must necessarily be at war with all previous forms of itself. The only person in the world who takes the Gospels seriously is he who declares himself the enemy of all religion. Religion must die to be born again as the holy spirit of a righteous social order. Summing up his criticism, Dr. Needham maintained that Dr. Haldane made the mistake of identifying religion with idealistic philosophy, and thereby failed to

recognise what is perhaps the most fundamental force in the world to-day.

Dame Elizabeth Haldane, sister of Dr. Haldane, said that he had not had much opportunity of studying the faiths of the Eastern countries which he had visited. So he had been very anxious to hear about them from those who did know. But he was always deeply conscious of the unity which underlay the differences, and believed that the meeting might be a valuable means of bringing understanding and sympathy to us all. Referring to her other brother, Lord Haldane, she said that it was tragic that both brothers should die just as they were beginning to try to emphasise the universal application of religion. Both were truly religious men, and to them philosophy and religion were not dis severed, but one. That the world is a spiritual universe in which God is revealed was a point which Dr. Haldane particularly emphasised in conversation. He believed that through the ideals of goodness, truth, and beauty, we were in touch with a deeper reality. Beauty was nothing but the manifestation of an all-embracing personality and a witness to the existence of God. This was the special point about which Dr. Haldane used to talk so much just before his death.

Mr. Yusaf Ali said that in Islam the unity of God meant many things, and not simply that God is one as opposed to the many gods of mythology. It meant that God is the beginning, the starting point. All God's creation has an organised unity which reflects God's mind and personality, and that idea of personality was transferred to God's creation. Dr. Haldane's was, he thought, a valuable commentary on that subject.

Mrs. Mitchison said that although the paper was almost the last thing her father wrote, it had been



written in the full tide of work. It was not the paper of an old man, nor was it the paper of someone who was shut up in a study. It was the paper of a practical man of science, and one who enjoyed controversy. As to the political side of Dr. Needham's criticism, she said her father hated oppression of any kind. He never saw anything from a class point of view. She also thought her father's point of view was not as far from dialectical materialism as one might suppose. He was thinking about the real world when he wrote his paper—the world with which he had to deal and in which he was happy and fulfilled—the world of miners and factory workers and soldiers, men in constant danger, and constantly displaying heroism. These were people her father worked with, and his thoughts were given freely to them. He saw and knew what he called the spirit of God in them.

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Another philosophic view was presented by Dr. Stein. M. Marcault, in introducing him, said that to the question before the meeting: *Is World Fellowship possible?* there could be only an optimistic reply. The reason for such optimism was the presence, not only above but also within the world, of the great Power that had borne the world along millions of years, and through crises probably far more difficult than this is in our own eyes. In the presence of an Omnipotent Wisdom, Love, and Power we rested our faith—nay, our certainty—that through this crisis the world would pass and enter into eras of progress and happiness beyond. Dr. Stein was a philosopher who had the gift of handling ideas which were usually vague in people's minds but which were concrete in the mind of one who could grasp them. This gift he had cultivated

under the guidance of a very great man, Dr. Rudolf Steiner.

Dr. Stein then delivered his address on "*Is World Fellowship possible in view of the antagonisms in the World?*" He pleaded for world fellowship in organising and planning the practical necessities of life. He would declare every day to be a holy work day in which something could be done to bring us nearer to the human ideal. We should find a way leading out of philosophy and religion to a solution of the practical problems of everyday life. That would be the common work and common life of a true world-brotherhood.

The antagonisms between the religions and between the philosophies were not fundamental. They were but fragmentary expressions of a whole which alone contained the truth. We could have different pictures of the same tree because each had been made from a different angle. Thus religions and philosophies were forms of thought which could accurately express reality, but only in a one-sided manner. He took a pencil as an example of how to avoid one-sidedness of outlook: From a materialistic standpoint it was merely a combination of wood and graphite. Realistically regarded it was a tool that served for writing. From an idealistic standpoint it was a medium for giving thoughts a physical manifestation. By comparing the apparently different points of view—Materialism, Realism, and Idealism—in the simple example of a pencil, we could see that they were not contradictory but complementary; but it was only when they were all taken together that the full description appeared. It was the same with philosophies and religions: none were actually false, but all were one-sided and led to error if their advocates overlooked that essential fact.

He therefore stressed the importance of people educating themselves so that their outlook might be enlarged; of recognising the validity of contrasting opinions in all spheres, and of having no illusions about the field within which ideals as such can be morally justified. Breadth of outlook and real knowledge of the special talents and psychologies of the different nations were also factors tending to World-Brotherhood. The experience of Pentecost showed how individualised humanity could find the spirit of community once more. The League of Nations and the economic crises of modern humanity could only find their solution in the spirit of a World Pentecost.

He went on to say that the religion of the future depended upon the ability of the West to solve its various problems, though the West would only be able to solve the social question when it was willing to take the East, as its brother, into the Sanctuary. The Congress would have an immediate effect in the religious sphere if, out of its varied points of view, a single purpose could grow to tackle the real tasks of the modern world. To this end there should proceed out of this World Congress of Faiths a World Congress to regulate supplies of raw products, to safeguard the rights of minorities, to establish freedom of individuals in culture, education, and religion. What we needed to-day were World-institutions. For example, the wheat-controllers alone could do nothing else with surplus wheat except burn it; but mankind as a whole could control such a circumstance by suitable organisation and finance. A plane should be found on which religion could become effective in a practical way,—a point where goodness could become concrete, a point at which the spirit common to all humanity could work for the good of

all. We might therefore hold our various philosophies, religions and creeds in mutual esteem, but join hands in this work for mankind.

Mr. Fergusson, in opening the discussion, said that economics is one aspect of religion. When we have conquered that aspect we shall have mastered the world. But in order to master the material we must master the spiritual, and in order to master the spiritual we must master the material. That is the main reason why world fellowship is possible through religion. All religions, though there are differences, have one single tradition running through them. Thus we have the two main aspects. We have a common material influence in the way of economics. We have a common spiritual influence in the common tradition running through the world. And when man can unite these two, spiritual and material, then he will be master of his fate and captain of his soul.

Mr. Fuad Attasullah, a Turkish Muslim, said that the Koran insisted on preserving balance. The whole essence of life was balance. If the weights were too heavy there was robbery, and robbery, too, if the goods you were buying were too heavy. There must be balance of the spirit and facts. The present trouble was in the men in control not having the heart of righteousness in making the distribution. When, in this Congress, men had come to an understanding on a certain point, they should stabilise that idea and give a lead to others and strengthen them in carrying it out.

Continuing the debate, Mr. Warbeke asked whether we should really be better off religiously on a Communistic basis, as had been suggested at a previous session. Was Communism the true religion? He could imagine a world in which all were supplied with an

adequate income, all had the means of transportation, and all had the ordinary luxuries of life ; and yet in it there might be no religion. Would the moral solution of all moral problems be tantamount to religion ? He replied to himself that a world in which all were kind and decent to one another and in which there were no moral problems at all might still be lacking in religion. Again, we might make the world safe for democracy and yet might not be on the trail which leads to the central Holy of Holies. Morality, he thought, is not to be equated with religion. Religion must and does embrace morality. But it is vastly more than morality. Again, we could not regard science as a substitute for religion, which is something wider than economics, wider than morality, wider than science. To Mr. Warbeke it was an interpretation of the values we discover, and what becomes of these values which we call beauty, or truth, or goodness, in relationship to the environment in which we live, and viewed not from the standpoint of a particular local interest but of a holy disinterestedness. The speaker who said that the universe was an expression of an inmost soul came very near to the heart of the matter. He believed the values we discover in our souls are the realities which shine through and glorify our lives. They are realities just as certainly as the objects of science are realities—just as certainly as science itself is a reality. And on that basis men and women should take their stand.

M. Marcault, in closing the debate, referred to one point of special importance, namely : Dr. Steiner's view of a blend of East and West had been realised in considering the world of human affairs as part of the Cosmos. We in the West had divorced man too much from the Cosmos. We were over-humanised and under-cos-

mosised. Another point of importance was that if we reach the individual in man we touch the universal, and that if man discovers his whole self he is in touch with the universe. Lastly, while not using the word "communism" in any political or economic sense, he would say that true communism might be, not the dividing and acquiring by those who have not of that which others have—not this, but the dividing and giving out to all of that which man has.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN



### INDEPENDENT VIEWS

DAME MARIE OGILVIE GORDON, IN HER OPENING REMARKS on taking the Chair for M. Schlumberger's address on a *Humanist Point of View*, said that she considered the Congress a nobly planned enterprise whereby religious-minded people from all over the world might make contact with one another and derive fresh inspiration in their pursuit of good and truth. However varied might be the outward form of religious expression, the inward spontaneous impulse in each mind was towards the uplift of human thought and motive. And therein lay the common basis for sympathy and understanding between nations. It was the finest heritage of humanity—this instinct which drives towards mental uplift—this belief in the high purpose and destiny of all mankind. And we must have faith that the years would bring about the practical application of good feeling in the social and material relationships among the peoples of the world.

She went on to say that the leaders of the Congress had behind them a very considerable volume of public support and good wishes. Women had been in the forefront in pressing forward the advantages of international meetings for the purpose of discussion and interchange of information. Experience soon showed that quite apart from the stimulating effects of the discussions, the most valuable results lay in the personal contact made and the intimate talks. They recognised great objects common to all and for which all could work in their respective countries.

M. Jean Schlumberger then gave his address, speaking from the point of view of a religious humanist. There are, he said, a great number of minds who are in full sympathy with scientific methods and who live outside confessional organisations, but who yet preserve in their hearts a deep religious need—a desire to keep a spiritual link with the unknown. Whereas pure rationalists have no interest in what is outside the field of positive knowledge, such religious humanists do not want to feel estranged from this large domain of thought. They have come to their point of view through personal experience and are in touch with religious phenomena in their most universal aspects. Therefore they may play an important part as a link between the various faiths. They are men with an inner experience who want to give to their lives the fullest development of which they are capable. Though adhering to no formal religion, they refuse to give up the immense spiritual inheritance that religions have accumulated. Between total negation and total affirmation they believe there is room for an intermediate position more in harmony with human needs. They would therefore enjoy the past but would go on developing their inheritance.

Religious feeling M. Schlumberger defines as the intuition of a relationship with first causes and the search for harmonious union with them. Some, he said, have no such feeling in a conscious form yet, though they may possess it in embryo : they may feel that there is a region which is sacred. In their profession, their art, their affections, their loyalties, they are capable of veneration and of sacrifice. There may be a region of their being in which their hearts are pure, in which they may thirst for justice and perfection. Every soul has its own access into the Kingdom of God. Even though one



has no positive religion, no mystical feeling, it is possible to be in touch with the holy. And a man cannot reach peace of soul unless he keeps alive in himself this sense that there is a sacred element in the universe. A free-believer has been in some religion or other; and occidentals naturally find in Christianity their points of contact and symbolism. But a man may continue to take from Christianity certain modes of feeling and a spiritual language, and yet not claim for Christianity a unique or even privileged rank among the forms of spiritual lives which have reached a high degree of evolution. Indeed, a humanist refuses straight away to consider that any particular religion has a monopoly of truths; even though, through ignorance of non-Christian religions, he may not be able to use them in the practice of his personal life, he nevertheless recognises that they are legitimate and have access to the heights of religious feeling. We may only speak to our God in our traditional language, but we know that others can speak to Him just as legitimately in other languages. Thus we may accept religion as being useful, but always liable to revision. Everything which presupposes a complete and exclusive knowledge of truth is unacceptable to the humanist. Moreover the humanist insists much less on what separates the various religions than on what they hold in common. Thus, the most typical representatives of mysticism resemble one another, whatever religion they may belong to. In the same way ritualists resemble each other in all religions, speak a similar language and have a similar psychology, whether they be Buddhists, Taoists, Jews, Muslims, or Christians. So also is it with puritans. Suazo or John of the Cross are much nearer to some Indian Yogis or Persian Sufis than to Ambrosius, Joan of Arc, or Thomas Aquinas. Yet in stressing the

similarities in different religions he feels we do not want to reach a syncretic confusion. We want to get fundamental religious facts free from contingent aspects, because we want to find those forms of religious feeling with which we can be sincerely in communion.

On the use of the word "God", M. Schlumberger had some very apt remarks to make. "Throughout thousands of years over the whole earth, an immense wealth of spiritual life, of moral effort, of meditation, of poetry, has been gathered round the word 'God'. To do away with this word would mean to cut off all the links between one's own personal spiritual life and the whole of this wealth. The word 'God' expresses that which is the object of veneration for everyone—the first cause to which everyone adheres. We find here a common element marked by the word 'God' which is beyond all the notions we may have of the Divinity."

Referring to the spiritual life, he said each man has to make the best of this life, which comes to him once only. A religious attitude exists when the universe is seen as being something more than an interplay of blind forces or of absurd haphazard happenings. When the universe is given a meaning, then there is a religious attitude. There is an act of faith, that is, an act of trust in some law, in some plan. Simultaneously we should admit that there are things which are good and things which are less good—good things being those which work in the direction of that law, less good being what works against it. Perhaps this act of faith may be difficult to formulate, but it will not be vague in its final significance, since it concerns the whole of our being. And this act of faith is the test by which men are divided into two families: those who are religious and those who are not.

M. Schlumberger then showed the weaknesses of a movement of thought which was backed by no social organisation or by any teaching system. It could not be organised into a practising community or helped by a cult. It lacked the powerful force of ritual and liturgy. It was only the result of personal meditation, of tentative experiences and progressive adaptations. It gave no group ideal. Nevertheless, the humanistic religious attitude had a method, and a will to go more deeply and understand more fully. And this method and this will could be spread and give unity to a vast family of souls.

Moreover a conciliatory formula was more easily originated by men not committed to either side in the great religious controversies of the day. So the free-believer instinctively took the part of conciliator. Indeed it might be said that the religious humanist was the person who could best observe the eternal and uncontrollable effort of religious feeling, because he was outside administrative preoccupations and had escaped the codifying and stabilising influences of organised religions.

And the religious feeling of the humanist, M. Schlumberger explained, is no mere poetical emotion. There are moments when prayer and poetry are one—one attitude in the soul. But religious feeling, in his view, belongs to a different order of things because it is clearly conscious of being more than a fantasy of the imagination. Also, it comes in hours of humiliation and distress in which man is far from this exaltation—from this surplus of activity of poetical ecstasy; though it is necessary to add that when it is seen in its depths the mood of the creative poet is quite near that of the true believer. To be religious, then, is to believe that there is an order of things in the soul which is different from

the intellectual order of things ; in which the ways to knowledge are different and directed to another kind of reality. The free-believer, like all other believers, tries to reach contact with an eternal principle which is beyond contingencies. He adheres to a central force and looks towards the sun round which he gravitates. He knows that there is a central star and that his own career through the heavens is not mere haphazard wandering. For his own secret illumination the certainty of this loyalty is sufficient. He knows that, through all religions, man makes the same efforts towards harmony with a supreme cause ; he knows that all the good servants of the spirit are of one race, and that the deepest element in their feeling can be expressed by much the same words. He may or he may not believe in individual survival or in a transcendent God, or call his God by this or that name, yet he may claim a place in the great religious brotherhood.

Dr. D. N. Maitra, a Hindu, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, said in opening the debate that he wished to speak not as representing his Church but as a "free-believer". To him religion was an experience, or the pursuit of an experience, which might or might not be demonstrable to our material senses but which man held to for many reasons. One was that he might experience joy and a sense of ecstasy. Or it might be as a solace to his soul in time of grief ; or as an inspiration and strength to carry on his work and to battle his way through life.

Reflecting on the falling-off in attendance at churches and places of worship all over the world, Dr. Maitra urged that religion should be placed on a plane and presented in a form that would satisfy all souls. And to him the perfection of life consists, on the one hand, in

the fulness of life, and on the other in its fulfilment. The fulness of life comes through the complete contact with the outside through all our senses, excluding none. But life must express itself in fulfilment also. Taking all that is around us, we should make our lives a harmony and give back in service. That would be humanism, and it should be inspired by a sense of God in us. Our lives differ as musical instruments differ. Lives of many are of one string : others are of many strings. An ideal life should give a perfect harmony. Not by denying life but by having fulness of life through a perfectly harmonised relationship with all that is around us, and being guided by a divine relationship, shall we really enjoy life and come nearest to religion.

Referring to idol worship, Dr. Maitra said that in his young days he was violently against idolatry. Later he found men of the deepest faith concentrating their whole spirit before an idol, as electric currents are concentrated on a point : and these men would come back from their worship with remarkable faith and strength. Real idol worship is not idol worship. To the true worshipper the idol is only a symbol of one of the many aspects of the Divinity. Before it a man could concentrate his mind and gain the spiritual strength and solace he needed.

Dr. Daickes, continuing the discussion, considered independent religious thought to be the core of every religion. The human race, he said, is nothing without God, and God very little without the human race. Take away the human race and the heavens are empty. Take away God and the human heart is empty. To-day the human heart has been filled again with vigour and hope.

Lord Allen of Hurtwood spoke of the multitude of people who belonged to no Church but who had a

religious outlook. If the Churches would be gracious to them in their waywardness they might perhaps form a thread running through all the Churches. Referring then to the particular influence that modern science was having upon the present generation, he believed that it was going to create a spiritual revolution. Science gave man a mastery over nature. Because men had been ignorant and powerless they had tended to take refuge in superstition. They used, therefore, to look to authority. Then came science, and man became master of nature. He felt a new self-respect. He could now form his own judgments; and he became a powerful individual. But the first effect of this was that he became self-assertive, selfish, regardless of his fellow-men. People then began to say that all spiritual values would be lost. Against this view, Lord Allen protests. He believes that although men are now prouder of themselves and more self-respecting, the very fact that they think so much of their own power is beginning to make them feel themselves humble in the presence of a wider power.

Lord Allen argued that directly we feel ourselves made individually responsible and know that we can be powerful ourselves, we become conscious of a purpose in the world around us. "I cannot but feel that the sense of purpose will ultimately return to the world, for men are more purposeful when they are free than when they are slaves. After a period of self-assertion, men and women will in all humility want more and more to become the agents through whom the divine purpose may express itself. Out of that will come a new revival of religious responsibility among men and women of all nations." It was therefore in no fearfulness that Lord Allen looked out over the world of science. Religion

had worked its cruel destructions as well as science, and now there had to be a unity of these two great forces. And if the Churches would be patient with those who were wayward, they would try to bring into the common stock whatever they could for the common happiness.

Mr. Fellows thought the chaos in Christianity to-day was the result of accepting Jesus Christ, the Founder, as giving a final revelation. If we accepted any revelation or truth as final, a condition was set up in which were bred all the evils that flesh is heir to.

Dr. Herman argued that with faith and love alone we could not have the spirit. They were not enough. We must have understanding,—understanding of the principle that God does not come to us by mere grace, but only so far as we are able to meet Him. We had only to ask what Jesus would do in such and such a case. We could not do better to bring about a religious fellowship.

The last address of the series was delivered by M. Marcault. Dr. Stein was in the Chair and, in introducing the lecturer, said it was important to watch how the inner spiritual content of the Congress was growing under the inspiration of the main speakers. If we compared what they said we should find that they tended towards an exact, clear aim. We could see that behind all these different men's religions and philosophies there was one great universal force which was trying to become embodied. We should see in the lecture to be delivered the real spirit of the time. That spirit was powerful but most modest, because it loved human freedom. Other forces which had not this love for human freedom might seem to be stronger, but we could be sure that

the forces to be described by the lecturer, freedom of love and universality based on individualism, were in the long run the stronger.

M. Marcault, taking "*The Right of the Spirit*" as the title of his address, said the repeated failures of secular conferences to bring about peace all had their root in one cause, namely, in upholding the rights of the particular against the right of the universal. Peace could never be a *modus vivendi* between particular rights. Fellowship would never result from a mutual promise of conflicting interests not to come to a conflict. Fellowship must be incarnated in a common aim, in a positive universal object whose right superseded in the minds of the contracting parties their own particular rights. Peace could radiate only from the individual whose consciousness was at one with the universal. Our time, he said, is struggling towards that common aim for all nations on whose universality their fellowship can be based. We have reached a climacteric point in the evolution of human consciousness towards universality. In the realm of matter the ultimate right is not of particular atoms but of the universal energy, and the physicist has come to view our universe with eyes truly universal. For the first time also we are contemplating the universality of human living. The right of every man to a reasonable share in the means of living is being recognised. And in discovering the universal outside man has discovered the real self within. No man can know all, love all, serve all unless he is himself individually universal in nature.

M. Marcault went on to explain that in finding the stream of consciousness, the intuition, the spiritual energy beyond the mind, our time has found the real individual, man—man who, through his mind, is the



creator of all social institutions, and who will create a universal society as soon as he knows himself wholly. He believed the supreme right is not of the institutions, but of the individual spirit, the creator of all past as of all future institutions. Institutions are indeed but dwelling places where individuals can find the spiritual shelter and the spiritual food they need—causes of conflict if they are regarded as possessing the supreme right, but amenable to peaceful organisation when they are seen as subordinate to the supreme right of the individual men for whom they exist.

With these considerations in view we could approach the problem of World Fellowship through religion and see that here also Fellowship could not be attained by a mere *modus vivendi* between churches and creeds, by trying to find some common minimum of doctrine or worship to which all faiths could subscribe, and in which they could all commune. Fellowship could only be constructive if it were incarnated in some positive religious aim in the realisation of which all faiths could agree to co-operate, and the universality of which would maintain them in unity. And first he noted that the world of religion had become one and universality had been reached : the scripture of all religions had been translated into all languages ; and what was of more importance, the descriptions of mystical experiences had been made available for all cultured minds. And many were those who, without joining any particular community, struck a non-confessional path towards the Divine, guided by the pure psychologists of the spiritual life.

At the same time, comparative study of the mystical experiences described in the various faiths had led to the discovery of their fundamental unity. There were varieties of the religious experience, “ but the experience

is one—not Hindu, not Buddhist, not Christian, not Islamic, but human ; identical in all faiths because men are constitutionally alike in their psychological make-up.” Moreover, the religious experience did not take place within the theological mind, nor did it occur within ceremonial gesture. Theological constitutions, rites, and objects of worship might embody a very high potential of religious emotion and consequently awaken it in religious souls. But they only incarnated it symbolically. Whereas the mystical experience had its seat in the human spirit, embracing the totality of our little universe of human relationships, when, gathered in its unity and wholeness, it tended towards the great universal Oneness within and above. We did not reach Communion with God because we were linked to the Divine by a community, by a creed, or by a rite, but because our very nature was individually participant in His nature. And here also the right of the religious experience was supreme, while the right of the religious institution was increasingly seen to be secondary.

But we were seeking for Peace and Fellowship. And because religion trained the human spirit to a consciousness of its universality, it could be a mightier element for peace and fellowship than any other institution ; though there could only be peace if we pinned our faith on some universal object that we could pursue only with positive fervour and sincere devotion. That object, M. Marcault suggested, might well be education—education understood as being not a mere teaching of doctrine, nor the imposition of a discipline, but as the training of men to attain the mystical experience themselves.

Proceeding in his argument, M. Marcault said that the

spiritual world was not above the material world, nor the material world below the spiritual world: they met and blended in man's composite nature. The education of the whole man should be one, and Church and School should join hands in the task. Also, religion and science should end their divorce and together undertake the education of the whole man,—body, mind, and spirit, to a consciousness of his unity, in reverent and loving subordination to the great divine universal Oneness. And education, considered as the inspiration towards unattained greatness, concerned the whole of man's duration; for spiritual growth did not stop on leaving school. Therefore, there was for religion a still more glorious task.

At present progress was taking place apart from religion and deprived of spiritual leadership, because religion, remaining with its tradition in the past, holding it in custody and held by it in custody, had forsaken its task of inspiring progress. But religion should not for ever be incapable of regaining the leadership of civilisation. It should inspire all advance, within the never-exhausted and ever-future inspiration of the giant mystics, the founders at once of religions and of civilisations.

If the leaders of the Church, in association with the greatest of thinkers, artists, and statesmen, were to incarnate in their souls and minds the whole spiritual present, and aspire towards future unfoldment, they might regain for religion the leadership of civilisation. By vitalising the inspiration of all the creators, they might permeate the thought, art, politics, and even economics of the time with a deep spirituality. But if religion was to achieve that result—if all religions, remaining banded together for their common task, were

willing to fulfil this mission—they must live with and for their time. They must realise that the supreme right is not of the guide but of the guided—not of the institutions, creeds, rites, or Churches, but of the spirit. And that meant that the supreme right was of every living man, within or without the Church, for in each individual man was the universal Spirit, the Wisdom, the Love, and the Power—the Living God.

Major Yeats-Brown, in opening the discussion, said that he had just come from a country where the rights of the spirit were perhaps better safeguarded than they were here. The ancient Hindu system had preserved, at any rate among the higher castes, something of that mental poise and intellectual integrity for which M. Marcault had made such a powerful plea. To one point Hindu thought had devoted much attention—to the distinction between true peace and mere avoidance of war. In that profound work, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna summed up the whole argument on the question whether to fight or not by saying: “Weapons touch not the life within. True peace is of the illumined Self that moves among the objects of sense without attraction or repulsion.” We ought to be clear that what we were discussing at the Congress was the mystical peace—the peace that passeth all understanding—and not the mere material avoidance of war. As we were all partners in this new and wonderful world, our first object, he thought, was to get as good dividends as possible from this grand business of living. Among partners there were bound to be divergences, and such divergences were to be accepted and welcomed. He believed in the friction of mind against mind. It made for human progress.

Major Yeats-Brown mentioned that he had just been

visiting Rabindranath Tagore and Sir Jagidas Bose, both of whom had devoted their time to breaking down the barriers which divided man from all those lesser lives in the world around us. And when we thought of them and of Sir C. Raman, the great mathematician, and Sir Radhakrishnan, we could realise what great gifts India was giving to the modern world, and how she was contributing to the progress of mankind.

With reference to what M. Marcault had said about practical mystics, he would like to add a fifth name to the list of great Indians—the name of Sir Anand Sarup, the leader of the Dayalbagh Colony near Agra. Every morning about two thousand came to him for a full hour before going to their factories and fields. The material results had been amazing. The whole place had been turned from a wilderness into a garden city, and the industries were known all over India. There, also, was the best dairy farm in Asia. And all had been accomplished not from the point of view of material advantage, but in order to create the conditions under which the colonists could serve their fellow-men and worship God. They owned no personal property. All belonged to the Colony. God was the beginning and end of their adventure.

M. Marcault had made an interesting comparison between the purification, contemplation, and communion of the Christian mystics and the dharana, dhyani and samadhi of the Yogis. Only a month ago he, Major Yeats-Brown, had been talking to a young Samadh-Swami who had gone into the Samadhi trance and remained there nine days without speaking or moving, absorbed in the Divine Life and quite unconscious of the world. What struck Major Yeats-Brown was the carefulness of the preparation made. He had trained for his

mystical experience with all the definiteness of an athlete training for a boat-race.

Mr. Francis Payne argued that if we would drop the ideas of hatred and fear and unite to solve our difficulties under the guidance of God, the Good Lord that shapes all existence, we should be ashamed to reject the moral promptings of our nature. Of what were we afraid? We were afraid of ourselves. We had no need to be afraid of God. He was beneficent and good. Nor had we need to fear Nature. She had made a lovely world. We should therefore cease trying to master each other and instead co-operate for mutual benefit. In place of rivalry we should exercise that universal virtue, compassion, and realise that the interest of one is the interest of all, that a wrong done to one person is a sin against all. We should cease quarrelling over our particular views of the Divinity, and, instead, recognise that there is something very great, very majestic that is making for good, and that we must co-operate with It.

Mr. Harjivandas Kalidas Mehta urged that we needed religion; and he defined religion very simply as that which teaches man to be good and to do good. God was good, true, and beautiful. And anyone who tried to be good and to do good was being God. That seemed to him the best way of developing God-consciousness. But here came a difficulty. We had more or less humanised God, and therefore were afraid of Him. If a Hindu left the Temple of Shiva and went to the Mosque of Allah, perhaps Shiva would be angry. If a Muslim went to a Jain Temple, perhaps the Prophet would be angry. And if a Christian went to a synagogue, perhaps God would not like it. This conception, said Mr. Mehta, had caused disharmony and war among religions. But if we took the true conception of God :

that whatever was true was God, that whatever was beautiful was God, and that whatever was good was God, and that whoever tried to follow truth, whoever tried to be beautiful in his body, in his thoughts, in his emotions, in his life, was being God and therefore worshipping God,—then we should have harmony. M. Marcault had spoken of education as the inspiration to unattained greatness. M. Mehta agreed, and added that spirituality must be included : we had also to be in touch with those who had realised the truth—with the great Prophets. A Christian should think of Christ, a Hindu of Sankara, a Buddhist of Lord Buddha, and a Muslim of Mahomed, because these Great Ones had developed greatness and educated man in their principles.

Mrs. Naomi Mitchison said that M. Marcault had dealt with the supremely practical business of inspiring people on different spiritual levels. Her father, the late Dr. J. S. Haldane, had this faculty of dealing with people who were working with him. When they were worried he would put them right and they would go away feeling raised to a higher level. There was another way in which the faculty was manifested. That way was being in love. Donne and Blake were examples ; they had experienced both the ecstasy of love and the ecstasy of mysticism. And it did the same thing to the mind. What we wanted was a world in which that kind of thing might be made possible for everyone. A probable pattern of the good society of the future had been shown by M. Marcault. It seemed to be a society of spiritual castes. What might appear to be aristocratic was really democratic. It would be without class, without untouchables. It would be a system in which the highest caste would not get more money and would be without prestige. It would just be there as a part of the community and a most important

part, but good enough in its own right and with no need for any added prestige or power.

Mr. Hussein thought the word "mysticism" very misleading. M. Marcault was referring to a form of mysticism which might be called "creative mysticism," after Bergson, while Major Yeats-Brown seemed to conceive of mysticism as implying a peace which would shut our eyes to objects of the senses. There was a mysticism in which the categories of the intellect must be transcended, though the intellect had at any rate played a preparatory part. This mysticism did not shut its eyes to objects of the senses. By appreciating the beauty of an object, a poet could show the universal in the particular.

M. Marcault, in reply to the debate, said that for over thirty years he had been a student of Yoga and the psychology was known to him by its practical applications. The psychology of Christian mystical experience was also known to him. So if he had centred attention on the psychological point of view it was not from want of experience of the practical side. And Yoga seemed to him at the present time to be leading the yogi out of the world. The seclusion which the yogi sought was due to selfishness. The world was in need of its mystics. And if Indians were coming over to the West to learn our science of matter, we in the West had need of the science of the spiritual life. Indian yogis should leave their seclusion in mountain and forest and come out into the world.

M. Marcault said that in bringing yoga and the psychology of Western mysticism together he had meant to insist upon the psychological side of the mystical experience. The last element in the effort for yoga is what the Christian calls communion and the Hindu



samadhi. That is the forgetfulness of all the levels of consciousness and all the objects of consciousness and the self, and with this forgetfulness the experience of a great exaltation about which the yogis themselves and the Christians themselves refuse to speak.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN



### THE SUPREME SPIRITUAL IDEAL (Christian, Jewish, and Hindu Views)

THE TWO PUBLIC MEETINGS AT WHICH A REPRESENTATIVE spokesman of each of the great religions was to speak on the supreme ideal were to be held at the Queen's Hall on Monday evening, July 6th. At these public meetings there was to be no discussion, and it was intended that the emphasis made by speakers should be more on the feelings than on the intellect. At the first meeting the speakers were a Christian (Canon Barry, Canon of Westminster), a Jew (Rabbi Mattuck, Minister of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue) and a Buddhist (Dr. Suzuki). Lord Snell, Chairman of the London County Council, was in the Chair.

In introducing the speakers, Lord Snell said that the meeting dealt with a fundamental and vital matter—united service in a common cause. Behind the divisions, the ambitions, the creeds, and convictions of those present, there was a unity of spirit and outlook and a recognition that all of us owed an ultimate allegiance to a great ideal. We recognised that there was a best beyond the best of any of us. The Congress existed not to mould people into one form but to promote diversity of approach without causing disunity. It aimed at spiritual equivalents rather than isolation or equality. We had no need to be afraid of diversity. It was precisely the difference in form and colour of the trees and flowers that made the beauty of the earth. It was monotony that was stupefying. As music spoke all

languages, so religion had many intellectual settings and we had to get behind these to find the real man. We did not ask whether yesterday's hero was a Buddhist, a Muslim, or a Confucian, or if a Christian, whether he was a Catholic or a Protestant. We paid homage to the religiousness that was in him behind those creeds. Not in Mosque, or Temple, or Synagogue or Church alone was all the truth to be found. Everywhere where men were striving towards the supreme spiritual ideal, there it was to be found. If we could get to the real thing that was behind our differences and meet together on that wide platform it might be said of us: "Ye are as Gods."

Canon Barry said that all our plans and hopes for mankind ran back into the ultimate question: "What is the structure of the Universe? What is God like?" And the Christian Faith proclaimed to the world that the ultimate reality of things—the Power, the Pulse of Cosmic Energy, the Soul of Truth, the Giver of Life, the Fountain of Beauty, the Determinator of Destiny—was that Father of the spirit of man Who was in all that was good in every religion, revealing something of His Truth and Beauty, and Who had revealed Himself in a Man, the Founder of our religion. And those were the supreme ideals, spoken and lived in a way which all men and women could understand.

The world of to-day needed a faith to bind and lead, to regenerate and restore; to evoke and vitalise all the latent forces for good; to resist the forces of reaction, demoralisation and decay; to unite mankind in the service of a true ideal so that in that loyalty it might find peace and freedom. The fundamental issue of the world to-day was not really political: it was spiritual. The real conflict was not between any two groups of Powers,

but between two rival and incompatible philosophies which were struggling for the soul of man. The real dividing line was in the realm of spirit and conscience ; it was between two attitudes of human life and therefore, in the long run, between two attitudes to the ultimate spiritual reality of the universe.

Considering what should be the moral and spiritual foundation on which we could hope to build a better, a more alluring, and a freer world-order, he showed that the attempt to found a brotherhood on mere self-interest was to labour at a house that was built upon sand. There could be no hope of any secure building until we could find a common standard which all were prepared to acknowledge and by which we were all alike willing to be judged. And only that standard which was not man-made but lay beyond man, which came into our world, as the great religions all said, from above, could find universal acceptance. Only in God could the life of man be fulfilled and find peace. But for the moment something had gone wrong, and as man could no longer find a God in heaven, he was falling down and worshipping a god on earth, and offering himself a living sacrifice to the claim of the national State. In Canon Barry's view there was nothing, in the long run, but faith in God and in a Life Eternal which could be an effective spiritual bulwark against the pretensions of these new Cæsars.

Once more the ape, the tiger and the donkey were proving too much for us. And that discovery had been absolutely shattering to the nerves of modern man. Only in the rediscovery of a positive conviction—only in the evocation and release of a new spirit, could we hope to feel the heart of the world. For the last twenty years we had been trying to avert war instead of creating

and fostering peace and understanding. The acceptance of a positive ideal alone could deliver the world from its anxieties and fears. The Word which was spoken in Galilee seemed to him profoundly relevant to the situation of men and women in Nineteen-hundred-and-thirty-six. We could not cast out the devil through Beelzebub. The men who would best serve the world to-day were not those who went about emphasising differences, but those who eagerly sought for opportunities of understanding and appeasement and co-operation. It was faith that healed and united and made atonement. And the world over men and women were looking with a new wistfulness to Him, the one Leader Who still remained unmistakably a Leader amid the collapse of so many.

The next speaker was Rabbi Mattuck. He recalled the warning of the Prophet Isaiah : " Unless ye believe, ye shall not be established." Some might ask if no better advice than that could be given at a time of crisis like the present. The reply to such a question would be that human life in all circumstances had the same need—the need for a sense of reality and a right sense of values. And that was what faith meant. There might be a way of escape from our anxieties, but there was only one way out. We must look through our anxieties and solve our problems once and for all. Faith, like a ray of light, compounded of diversity, offered a simple solution, and like an electric current, it was capable of working in many directions. For faith was not merely a matter of standing quietly and waiting : it was an active attitude towards life, and sought to apply in all the circumstances of life certain definite principles and ways of conduct. It was the consciousness of attachment to God, present as a living reality in our life and the



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SIR ABDUL QADIR

*Muslim*



ultimate fact of our existence. Faith meant man's possession of God and God's possession of man.

By faith man gave himself in his thought, in his feeling, in his conduct, in his whole personality to God, so that the power of God worked through him and he became the channel for a spiritual force which gave him a strength infinitely greater than his own, and guidance that looked far beyond his own unaided vision.

But its first demand was the recognition of the supremacy of the spiritual—its first lesson that in comparison with the things of the spirit nothing else weighed so heavily. And we must admit that a large measure of our trouble was due to the fact that we had not recognised this supremacy of the spiritual. We had preferred the things that we could weigh or measure above the things which exalt human life. We had to learn, therefore, that ideals were greater than interests, that righteousness must be put above rights, peace far above power, and humanity above everything. Nations had no right to insist on their rights to the neglect of righteousness, or to insist on their needs at the cost of mankind's peace.

Judaism had realised early that it was a corollary of the belief in the universality of God to believe in the unity of mankind. One God must mean one humanity. But more was needed than the recognition of a biological unity of mankind. We had to recognise the spiritual unity: and that meant recognition by each nation of its share in and responsibility for humanity's life, and of its duty to work with the other nations for the fulfilment of humanity's destiny through the increase of righteousness and peace. No nation could live alone, working only for the establishment of its own purposes or the realisation of its own ambitions. For in that way a nation, like an individual, would lose its own soul. There was



only one argument that would count in the end : “ Have we not all one Father ? Has not one God created us ? Why, then, do we deal treacherously one with another ? ”

The task of religion was threefold. Firstly, to support those institutions which tried to make that unity actual. Secondly, to get religions themselves to give an example, in their teaching and in the lives of their adherents, of their recognition of that unity. And, thirdly, to win men and women for the religious outlook—not, indeed, for any particular religious outlook, but for that plain outlook on life which recognised the supremacy of the spiritual. There lay our hope for the future. And there lay our chief task for the good of humanity.

Rabbi Mattuck explained that in saying this he was not pleading for the establishment of one religion to include all men. He liked diversity. He would no more want a world with one religion than he would want a garden with only one-coloured roses. We could have diversity without enmity ; and when we did, the world would be more ready than now to receive the message of human unity and human peace. In the end, only in God could humanity be unified : “ They shall not destroy in all my Holy Mountain, saith the Lord, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.” Through that knowledge of the Lord which gave men an understanding of the true aims of life and impelled them to work and struggle and sacrifice for those aims, nations would be exalted and humanity established in peace.

Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan said he counted it a great privilege to speak on the Supreme Spiritual Ideal from the Hindu point of view. It was good to speak about ideals, for there, at least, were points of agreement between the different religions. To him it seemed that

the ideal, which all religions expressed in different ways, was that of making oneself perfectly and profoundly human—making oneself conform to the ideal pattern and so bring out the image of God: the whole man, the complete man was the ideal man, the divine man. Self-discovery, self-knowledge, self-fulfilment, was the destiny of man. And that was the ideal we were called upon to achieve and attain.

In his own country it was not the military heroes, or the statesmen, or even the poets and philosophers who were idealised and adored. It was those who strove after the ideal and in some measure achieved it who were there exalted. Such men were regarded as the *élite* of humanity. And towards them the rest of humanity must lift itself up. If we wanted to know the real spirit of any religion, we must try to understand that universal which is struggling to be expressed at every stage, though never fully and finally expressed at any stage. Then we should get to the spiritual core that bound together the different stages of development and made them all expressions of one spirit, one meaning, one spiritual essence.

The ideal of the Hindu religion was well symbolised by a recently-discovered figure dated about 200 B.C. It answered to the Shiva on a tall throne in an attitude of yoga, or concentration. That image had dominated the whole of the Indian religious landscape. It had pointed out that perfection consisted in self-conquest, courage and austerity, and brotherhood and unity of life. That had been the Hindu's idea from the beginning of his religious history. According to the Hindu scriptures the whole world had its roots everywhere, but its branches spread upward. And to establish a unity between the visible and the invisible, between subjective and objective,

between the finite and the infinite, between body, mind and spirit, should be man's supreme aim. He had to achieve order and attain harmony by a self-conscious, deliberate, intellectual effort. And until an organised wholeness of life was there, man would be unstable. He would always be trying to pass beyond himself, to bring out that particular pattern which was in him, that wisdom written in the inward parts which constituted the real core of a man.

The present crisis in human affairs was due, he thought, to a profound crisis in human consciousness. There was a struggle between our intellectual ideals, our instinctive nature, and our spiritual pattern. As yet there was no integration. This might be due to an exaltation of the intellect. Great as had been the triumphs of the intellect, great also had been its failures ; the essential values of life had escaped the meshes of the intellect. And it was this all-pervading positivism which had been the defect of our present civilisation. Man could never be without religion. The greatest gift of life was the dream of a higher life. There was a hunger for fellowship. If we took fundamental human nature, we should find there were invisible bonds which bound man to man,—there was a strong natural feeling of oneness with humanity. When there was a great catastrophe like an earthquake in Japan or a famine in India, all men's hearts went out to the victims. And when we witnessed an act of daring or heroism we did not ask whether the hero was a Confucian, Hindu, or Christian : we spontaneously took off our hats to him. But there were to-day those who took hold of men of this virginal nature, and by a falsification of inviolable authority, by intoxicating them with Messianic missions, had supposedly made the whole world better,—but had in

fact made men intolerant and proud and ready to fly at one another's throats.

Thus we should see that there was a conflict between human nature which craved for humanity, peace, and honour, and that human nature on which intellect had imposed her idols. Most people to-day had neither hope nor ambition to realise. They had no happiness to which they could look forward or faith by which to live. They were like Rodin's *Penseur*—a thinker, an intellectual man, with his head bent down, his eyes staring into space, his brow wrinkled with thought, his face furrowed with suffering, but looking at what? It seemed to Radhakrishnan that Rodin's *Penseur* suggested division of soul, man's inability to integrate his difficult, divided nature—to escape from the division in his own mind.

How, then, could we be liberated from these illusions? The one prayer of the Upanishads was : “Lead me from the unreal to the real ; from darkness to light ; from death to immortality.” And this immortality was not resurrection in the sense of rising from the tomb : it was rising from selfish individual life to universal spirit, from all these illusions into the universal light of humanity, from darkness into the really eternal, from the slavery of the world to the liberty of eternal life. It was of these things that perfection consisted.

If a Hindu were asked in what way this perfection could be reached, he would reply that the way was written in our own hearts, but that there were layers upon layers of intellect and sense which were covering up the truth in us, and that it was our duty to break through all these outer constraints and take our stand on the central spirit ; and there in the centre we should find a naked spirit which knew neither East nor West, but was common to all. If we looked at the men who

were able to do this we should see that there was only one kind of patriotism—love of humanity. They would have what Hindus call contentment or serenity in the depths. The misery of the world would never ruffle that serenity, not because they would regard the world's troubles as illusions, but because they had seen into the seeds of time and known that there was a perpetual transformation of evil into good. They would see that while the waves may be broken on the shore, the ocean goes on notwithstanding. They would have faith in the ultimate love at the centre.

Nor should such people who had thus enjoyed a glimpse of spiritual reality be thought of as avoiding responsibility and as not troubling about the work of the world. This religion asked us to overcome not merely external nature but also our own nature—to be king over ourselves and not over others. The effort each individual would have to make might be a lonely one. But it need not be regarded as mean individualism: it was really the escape from individualism.

The trouble in India was that it had failed politically. What was the good of talking about exalted spiritual ideas when India had lost its backbone, people might ask. But Indians never had exalted Mother India in the same way as the British had worshipped Britain, or the French France. They had never claimed the right to sacrifice gentleness, grace, and good manners for the sake of a nationalistic ideal. It was not by remembering God but by forgetting Him that the British Empire was built up, according to William Watson's reply to Rudyard Kipling. And now that the problem of nationalism had overtaken India, its leaders would try to bring it into line with ethics and plead the doctrine of non-resistance. Yet Radhakrishnan wished to point out to his Indian

friends that it was not by following the spiritual ideal that Indians had failed: it was because they had not followed it sufficiently. Men had to make spirit control life. The Hindu view of the real spiritual life was to develop the divine in us, to perfect ourselves, to be moved in our knowledge by the divine light, to be inspired in our emotions and our will by the divine purpose and the divine bliss, to get at the centre of truth, beauty, and goodness, to transform the substance of man into the image of God. That was the lofty spiritual ideal to which some few individuals had attained. And what some had attained all might attain. It could strengthen our energies, rescue us from cold reason as from burning passion, and inspire us with a vision of world-fellowship.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



### THE SUPREME SPIRITUAL IDEAL (Buddhist, Muslim and Independent Views)

SIR FREDERICK WHYTE WAS IN THE CHAIR AT THE second of the Queen's Hall meetings on the Supreme Spiritual Ideal. He said there was on that platform in microcosm, so to speak, the spectacle of unity in diversity, which always emerged when mankind was transferred from the confusing plane of his material interests to the simpler plane of his spiritual ideals. He had had a very remarkable illustration of that within a few moments almost of undertaking the duties of President of the Legislative Assembly of India some fifteen years ago. He told some of his colleagues that it was the practice of the British House of Commons to open its daily proceedings by a prayer pronounced by a Parliamentary Chaplain, and asked them whether such a thing would be possible there. They said: "Why not? Here we have in this Parliament and Government of India a Viceroy who is a Jew, a President of the Legislative Assembly who is a Scottish Presbyterian, a leader of the House who is a perfectly good British Anglican, a leader of the Opposition who is a still more representative Brahmin from Madras, a second leader of the Opposition who is a distinguished Muslim from Bombay." And scattered between these distinguished personalities were Burmese, depressed classes, Sikhs, and all the other manifold representations of humanity that you find in the Indian sub-continent, all in one single Chamber. A common prayer was perfectly possible because in com-

posing such a prayer they would be deserting the arid ground of logical disputation and dogma to assemble on the united ground of aspiration and hope. Just as it was true of the many nations represented in the Legislative Assembly of India in those days, so it was true in exactly the same measure for exactly the same reason on this very different platform.

Dr. T. Suzuki said :

“ When I was first asked to talk about the Supreme Spiritual Ideal I did not exactly know what to answer. Firstly, I am just a simple-minded countryman from a far-away corner of the world suddenly thrust into the midst of this hustling city of London, and I am bewildered and my mind refuses to work in the same way that it does when I am in my own land. Secondly, how can a humble person like myself talk about such a grand thing as the Supreme Spiritual Ideal, and this before such a grand assembly of people, everyone of whom looks to me to be so wise and intelligent, knowing everything that is under the sun? I am ashamed that I have somehow been made to stand here. The first mistake was committed when I left Japan.

“ Let me tell you how I lived before I came to London. In my country we have straw-thatched houses. Japanese houses are mostly little. Well, still in the country you see many such straw houses, and mine is one of them. I get up in the morning with the chirping of the birds. I open windows which look right into the garden. Japanese windows are quite different from your English windows. English windows are somewhat like holes made in the walls, but Japanese windows are a combination of English windows and walls. So when Japanese windows are opened, one side of the house is entirely taken away. The house itself opens right into



the garden. There is no division between the house and the garden. The garden is a house, a house is a garden; but here a house is quite separate. A house stands by itself, and so does its occupant. Its occupant is separated from his or her surroundings altogether. There is nature, here I am; you are you, I am I; so there does not seem to be any connection between those two—nature, natural surroundings, and the occupants of the house.

“So by opening Japanese windows, the house continues into the garden. And I can look at the trees quite easily, not as I look from the English window—that is a kind of peeping out into the garden—but there in Japan I just see the trees growing from the ground. And when I look at those trees growing right from the ground, I seem to feel something mysterious which comes from the trees and from the mother earth herself. And I seem to be living in them, and they in me and with me. I do not know whether this communion could be called spiritual or not. I have no time to call it anything, I am just satisfied. Then there is the little pond, a little lower down the garden. I hear the fish occasionally leaping out of the pond as though they were altogether too happy, and could not stay contented swimming in the pond. Are they? I do not know, but I somehow feel they are very, very happy indeed. Just as we dance when we are filled with joy, so the fish are surely dancing. Do they also get something from the element in which they live and have their being? What is this something, after all, which seems to be so stirred in my own self, as I listen to the dancing of the fish in the pond?

“Then this is the time for the Lotuses to bloom. The pond is filled with them, and my imagination travels

far out to the other end of the globe. When I talk like this, do you think I am dreaming in the middle of this big city? Perhaps I am. But my dream, I feel somehow, is not altogether an idle one. Could not there be in these things of which I am dreaming something of eternal and universal value? These huge buildings I see around me are really grand work, grand human achievements, no doubt. I had a similar feeling when I visited China and was confronted with the Great Wall, of which you have perhaps heard. Are they, however, of eternal duration, as I like to say my dreams are? Let the earth shake a little. Here in this part of the earth, fortunately, it does not seem to shake so frequently as it does in Japan. But let it shake for once. Well, I wonder what would be the result? I can see that result. I even refuse to think of it. But some time ago in an American Magazine a certain writer wrote about the ruins of the city of New York when possible future explorers will try to locate where certain of the highest buildings in the world—they call them skyscrapers, don't they?—which are now standing in New York would have been. But I will not go on any more with this kind of talk; I must stop dreaming, though it is very pleasant.

“Let me awake and face actualities. But what are those actualities I am facing now?—not you, not this building, not the microphone, but this Supreme Spiritual Ideal; those high-sounding words. They come from me. I can't be any longer dreaming of anything. I must make my mind come back to this subject, the Supreme Spiritual Ideal. But really I do not know what Spiritual is, what Ideal is, what Supreme Spiritual Ideal is. I do not seem to be able to comprehend exactly the true significance of these three words, placed so conspicuously before me.

“Here in London I come out of the Hotel where I am staying. I see in the streets so many men and women walking—or rather, running hurriedly, for to my mind they don’t seem to be walking ; they seem to be really running. It may not be quite correct to say so, but it seems to me so. And then their expressions are more or less strained, their facial muscles are contracted intensely ; they could be more easily relaxed. The roads are riddled with all kinds of vehicles, buses, cars, and other things ; they seem to be running in a constant stream—in a constant, ceaseless stream—and I don’t know when I can step into that constantly flowing stream of vehicles. The shops are decorated with all kinds of things, most of which I don’t seem to need in my little straw-thatched house. When I see all these things, I cannot help wondering where the so-called modern civilised people are ultimately going. What is their destiny ? Are they in the pursuit of the Supreme Spiritual Ideal ? Are their intense expressions somehow symbolic of their willingness to look into the spirituality of things ? Are they really going to spread this spirituality into the farthest end of the globe ? I do not know. I cannot answer.

“Now let me see, spirituality is generally contrasted to the material, ideal to actual or practical, and supreme to commonplace. If when we talk about the Supreme Spiritual Ideal, does it really mean to do away with what seems to be material, not idealistic but practical and prosaic, not supreme but quite commonplace—this our everyday life in this big city ? When we talk about spiritually, do we have to do away with all these things ? Does spirituality signify something quite apart from what we see around here ? I do not think this way of talking, dividing spirit from matter and matter from spirit, a

very profitable way of looking at things about us. As to this dualistic interpretation of reality as matter and spirit, I made some reference to it in my little speech the other day.

“In point of fact, matter and spirit are one, or rather, they represent two sides of one reality. The wise will try to take hold of the reality, the shield itself, instead of just looking at this side or that side of it, known sometimes as matter and sometimes as spirit. For when the material side alone is taken hold of, there will be nothing spiritual in matter. When the spiritual side alone is emphasised, matter will have to be altogether ignored. The result in either case is one-sidedness, the crippling of reality, which ought to be kept whole, and wholesome, too. When our minds are properly adjusted, and are able to grasp the reality which is neither spirit nor matter and yet which is, of course, spirit and matter, I venture to say that with all its materiality London is extremely spiritual; and further, when our minds are crookedly adjusted, all monasteries and temples, all the cathedrals and all the ecclesiastic orders in connection with them, all the holy places with their holy paraphernalia, with all their devout worshippers, with everything that goes in the name of religion, I venture to say again are nothing but materiality, heaps of dirt, sinks of corruption.

“To my mind, the material is not to be despised, and the spiritual is not always to be exalted—I mean anything which goes in the name of spiritual; I do not mean anything that is really spiritual, but things that pride themselves on the name of spiritual. Such things are not always to be exalted. Those who talk about spirituality are sometimes men of violent nature, while amongst those who have amassed large fortunes and seem ever to be inclined towards things material we

often find the highest and biggest souls, steeped in spirituality. But the main difficulty is—how can I bring my straw-thatched house right into the midst of these solidly built-up London walls? And how can I construct my humble hut right in the midst of this Oxford Circus? How can I do that in the confusion of cars, buses, and all kinds of conveyances? How can I listen to the singing of the birds, and also to the leaping of the fish? How can one turn all the showings of the shop window displays into the freshness of the green leaves swayed by the morning breeze? How am I to find the naturalness, artlessness, utter self-abandonment of nature in the utmost artificiality of human works? This is the great problem set before us these days.

“Again, I do not know about the Supreme Spiritual Ideal. But as I am forced to face this so-called materiality of modern civilisation, I have to make some comments on it. As long as man is the work of nature, and even the work of God, what he does, what he makes, cannot altogether be despised as material and contrasted to the so-called spiritual. Somehow it must be material-spiritual or spiritual-material, with the hyphen between these two terms, spiritual not divided from material, material not severed from spiritual, but both combined, as we read, with a hyphen. I do not like to make references to such concepts as objectivity and subjectivity, but for lack of a suitable term, just at this moment let me say this. If the spiritual-material, linked with a hyphen, cannot be found objectively, let us find it in our subjective minds and work it out so as to transform the entire world in accordance with it.

“Let me tell you how this was worked out by an ancient Master. His name was Yoshu, and the monastery in which he used to live was noted for its natural stone

bridge. Monasteries are generally built in the mountains. and this place where Yoshu used to reside was noted for its stone bridge over the rapids. One day a monk came to the Master and asked: 'This place is very well known for its natural stone bridge, but as I come here I don't see any stone bridge. I just see a rotten piece of board, a plank. Where is your bridge, pray tell me, O Master?' That was a question given to the Master, and the Master answered this way: 'You only see that miserable, rickety plank and don't see the stone bridge?' The disciple said: 'Where is the stone bridge then?' And this was the Master's answer: 'Horses pass over it, donkeys pass over it, cats and dogs. . . .' (Excuse me if I add a little more than the master actually said)—'Cats and dogs, tigers and elephants pass over it, men and women, the poor and the rich, the young and the old, the humble and the noble (any amount of those opposites might be enumerated); Englishmen, perhaps Japanese, Muslims, Christians; spirituality and materiality, the ideal and the practical, the supreme and the most commonplace things. They all pass over it, even you, O monk, who refuse to see it, are really walking over it nonchalantly; and above all you are not thankful for it at all. You don't say "I thank you" for crossing over the bridge.' What good is this stone bridge then? Do we see it? Are we walking on it? The bridge does not cry out and say: 'I am your supreme spiritual ideal.' The stone bridge lies flat and goes on silently from the beginning-less past to the endless future.

"I must stop here. Thank you for your kind attention to my Japanese English. I expect you have done your best to understand me. Then the kindness must be mutual, and in this mutuality of kindness, do we not

seize a little glimpse of what we call Spiritual World Fellowship ? ”

Madame Helidé Edib, the famous Turkish reformer, was the next speaker. She found that to define the Supreme Spiritual Ideal according to Islam was an extremely difficult and delicate matter. Different Muslims looked at it from different points of view. Islam believed in growth and evolution. Changing times brought changing laws. A great Muslim philosopher had once defined the philosophy of Islam in this way : “ God creates anew from moment to moment. Time is composed of indivisible nows, and if God was to cease to re-create from moment to moment the universe would vanish like a dream.” She believed in that definition of Islamic philosophy. There it was natural that she should be asked how changing religion could be a religion. To this question she would reply that there were certain universal principles in Islam and certain common things that made followers of the many sects all call themselves Muslims.

To the Muslim the three things, state, society, and individual, were knit into something like a seamless garment. Muslims had ceased to have common ideals for the State ; but there were still fundamentals in the individual life and in society which might be called Muslim. As an individual the Muslim was the man who submitted to the will of God and was the doer of good. According to the Koran, the Muslim was the man who believed in God and disbelieved in the devil—God being the Supreme Good and the devil the symbol of Evil.

A particular point in Islam was that the Muslim held that there was no intermediary between him and God.

God was in his own soul, and he must manage his contact with God as best he could. The only common denominator between all Muslims was the belief in the oneness of the universal Creator. And as long as that point was recognised it did not matter by what name a man called his God.

As regards Prophets : these were all taken as messengers only, and were all equal in rank. The Prophets brought the revelation to us. The supreme importance lay not with them but with the One from Whom all revelation came. The Koran also declared that the God of the Muslim and the God of the non-Muslim was one. Nor could the Muslim consider himself as specially favoured or chosen. Hero-worship was also contrary to the creed of Islam—even if the hero happened to be a prophet. When Mahomed died the most representative Muslim said : “ Let those who worshipped the Prophet know that he was only mortal and he died. Let those who worshipped God know that God is immortal and lives.”

The Muslim did not make a sharp division between the body and the soul. But as the spark of eternal life is in us the body must be taken care of, kept fit and clean, and preserved from all excesses which befog the mind and cause it to deteriorate. A harmony between the physical and spiritual being was demanded.

In its social aspect Islam regarded the individual as a unit of society and as affecting society, but it laid the emphasis on the society. Then again, Islam stood for social justice, and the foundations of social justice were that all men were equal and had equal rights, whatever their colour or race. Madame Helidé Edib thought, indeed, that the swift spread of Islam and its influence upon civilisation in its early period was due to this.



The French Revolution itself was due to the same idea. There was no class in Islam. Blood did not count at all: it was never a privilege and never a handicap. There certainly was a difference between the Scandinavians and the coloured Africans, though not because the Scandinavians had blue eyes and a fair skin and had made good railways and aeroplanes, but because they had created a higher degree of social justice. Similarly, one individual was superior to another not because of his class, or possessions or colour, but because of his higher wisdom, knowledge, and lofty moral attributes.

In economics, Islam laid stress on labour. "Man is man because of his labour," said the Koran. Men would receive the fruits of what they had worked for. And whether it was the work of the ruler who was controlling a State, or of an artisan, or of an artist, it was all labour; and all men could be brothers because of this labour. Lastly, Islam inculcated contentment—contentment in the material domain, though unlimited hunger and thirst for that which is spiritual. And men need not learn only from Islam. The Prophet said: "Seek knowledge even if it be in China." So Islam was above all a life of being and not having. The Supreme Spiritual Ideal for a Muslim was that he should believe in one God who was the God of everybody else; that he should understand that he was not in any way privileged, and that all nations were equal. If he wanted superiority he must achieve it by social justice. He must consider labour as sacred and live only by the fruit of his labour. Above all, there should be individual and collective responsibility for the whole.

The extraordinary thing in the present critical period, said the speaker, was that religions were taking no part in it. Did this mean that man had ceased to be conscious

of his spirit? This was not the case. There was never a time when so many new religious movements were rising up. Therefore she thought that world-religions had a great part to play. All men, singly and collectively, must do something in the great confusion.

Mr. Rom Landau, speaking from an Independent point of view, followed the Turkish lady. He said those who tried to approach the Supreme Spiritual Ideal from outside a creed knew that God could not become a concrete fact unless we had found Him within ourselves through our own effort. When did God become a concrete fact? Never more than in the rare moments of inner illumination when suddenly we seemed to discover what was true and what was false in our life. Such moments were usually the result of a shock caused either by great happiness or, more frequently, by a deep sorrow. But when they occurred they swiftly bore us towards the recognition of truth. Many Christians made the mistake of taking God for granted. They believed that Baptism, Communion and Prayer were sufficient to transform the God of their creed into their personal God. But these were not enough. We could bring about a realisation of God only by fighting for it afresh every day.

Mr. Landau considered our personal discovery of God as the one thing that really mattered, because we could not reform nations or create world-peace if we, as individuals, had not reformed ourselves and, above all, had not found our own God for ourselves. We need not blame Hitler, Mussolini, or the League of Nations for the position to-day. For Hitler, Mussolini, and the League of Nations were nothing but the material expression of our own state of mind. Life being one

indivisible unity, every one in that hall was just as much responsible for Hitler as every German was for the League of Nations.

Speaking from his personal experience he said that after having studied for over fifteen years with some of the most vital teachers of the time, he had suddenly caught a glimpse of what the Supreme Spiritual Ideal might be. But this came not through the teachers ; it came through a personal sorrow in his own life. Suddenly the truth was revealed to him that unless he submitted himself entirely to God's will he would ruin his whole future. And submitting himself to God's will was identical with living up to his highest ideals. These were the ideals of truthfulness, love, and service contained in most religions, but nowhere expressed more convincingly than in the Christian Gospels. Formerly he had considered those Gospels more in the character of a code of law. Now his own soul transformed them into an inner command. Christ's Gospel became his Gospel. Many, however, found it difficult to distinguish between submission to God's will and blind fatalism. God, though omnipotent, could disclose Himself to us only inasmuch as we allowed His commands to act through us. For even God could not interfere with the divine spark which He had infused into every one of us. But as soon as we lived up to our highest ideals, our own free choice became identical with the choice which God Himself would have made for us.

But there were also those aspects of the divine which lay outside ourselves in the phenomena of nature, in the events of history. We must take into consideration all those hidden laws and powers for the discovery of which science has not yet found the right instruments. We had to find the divine roots of all phenomena. There

were millions of humble seekers after God who were unable to find full satisfaction in their particular creed and who were trying to approach the divine by studying what were often called by the misleading names of the "mystical" and the "occult". Among such investigators were men as different as the scientist Rudolf Steiner and the mystic Krishnamurti. Thousands followed the latter, who seemed to have discovered the very roots of what the kingdom of happiness should be and who, through the living example of his own personality, seemed to radiate the truth of his own doctrine.

How then could we fulfil our Supreme Spiritual Ideal? Only by acquiring deeper spiritual, as opposed to purely rational, knowledge from every source available—occult, mystical, scientific, artistic; and by trying to create within ourselves a union between such knowledge and an inner being that had become an instrument in higher hands. Only a life of complete submission of our entire being and our entire knowledge to God's will, continuous daily effort, and an acceptance of the hidden laws through which the supreme beauty of the order and unity throughout the cosmos was manifest, could solve the problems with which we were faced to-day.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



### THE FAREWELL MEETING

AS A CLOSE FOR THE WHOLE CONGRESS WE HAD ARRANGED to hold a farewell meeting in the Queen's Hall on the evening of July 17th. The speakers were all to be non-British. Señor Madariaga had expressed his keen desire to be present and take the Chair. M. Jacques Maritain had accepted our invitation to speak. Dr. Parkes Cadman, the brilliant orator from America, had also agreed to take part. And the great Japanese Christian, Kagawa, had fully expected to be present. These together would have formed an ideal platform, and we had looked forward to seeing a crowded hall and an enthusiastic audience. But one by one each of these failed. Dr. Madariaga was detained in Geneva by the Abyssinian crisis. M. Jacques Maritain was called away to South America. Dr. Parkes Cadman was removed by death, and Kagawa, on account of eye trouble, was refused admittance to England. We were left with an empty platform and had to look forward to an empty hall. But our faith held. If we had to lose the support of well-known persons from outside, we gained an advantage by using no less distinguished persons who had actually been taking part in the deliberations of the Congress : M. Marcault, Mahendranath Sircar, M. Saurat, and Mr. Yusaf Ali. And we were justified in our faith. When we appeared upon the platform the Hall was full. The Congress had created its own reputation.

M. Marcault made an ideal Chairman, and all the better because he had attended and taken part in the

Sessions. After referring to the failure of all efforts to establish the peace of the world on either a political or an economic basis, he said that historians of the future would regard it as significant that after these failures the Congress of the Religions of the world should have met to try, on the spiritual plane, to establish that peace which, on the plane of politics and economics, had so far proved impossible. The reason why there was more to be expected for peace from the Congress of Religions was that religion had to do with the whole man and with the whole universe. It was because religion, in so far as we considered it as the link between the individual soul and the universal soul, included all that was universal in the world and expressed in the capacity of men to know all and serve all. In the universal extension of our capacities for knowledge, love, and action, we had a certain proof that that which knows and loves and acts in us—in each one of us—was universal. And therefore, because in each man we found the universal, because the religious experience existed for all men in uniting in their universality with the great universal oneness above, we could be certain that in religion we had a more secure basis for peace than in the divisions of the political and economic world.

Following the Frenchman came the Hindu, Mahendranath Sircar. He said that though the world was thinking aloud to-day and every word was broadcast till it became the property of all mankind, yet it seemed that religion was being neglected. After the War immense changes had been introduced into every field of life and thought, yet, strangely enough, although these movements were humanistic they were often anti-religious. Such movements might have been necessary as a check to what had so far gone by the name of

religion ; institutional religion had been criticised for introducing a kind of commercialism in the domain of the spirit. But religion was essentially a personal affair. It was what was done "in one's solitariness". In that solitariness God visited the seeker with the entirety of existence. It was the effort of the finite spirit to get in touch with the infinite in wisdom and love, and it was essentially a matter of immediacy and experience. When the touch of immediacy was lost, religion passed into theology. The former infused us with life and spirit : the latter encouraged dogmatism. He would not for a moment discourage the scientific study of religion, but religion was more than a study of spiritual experiences. It was essentially the blessed privilege of coming into a personal touch with the invisible and intangible and enjoying the finer blossoming of life which such a contact alone could inspire. These were all invaluable experiences ; and for the complete unfoldment of our spiritual being every one of them was necessary in the setting of life,—every one added to its dignity and delicacy. Theology divided us, but religion united. What was necessary was the live spirit of religion. That alone could solve the many perplexing problems with which we were faced.

The greatest need of the day was to free ourselves from the Shibboleths of the ages and evolve a cosmic sympathy and right wisdom. The world was fast changing. At last, through the clouds, a shining light was breaking—a new civilisation more humanistic though not less spiritual. The religion of the cosmic man was in sight—the cosmic man who would be the instrument of a finer expression of the Divine. The spirit of God which filled the whole universe with its unfathomable sublimity was coming upon man as the Cosmic Man.

That was the new message of the great thinkers of to-day. Through all the struggles of humanity consciousness seemed to be evolving in that way. And this cosmic man would welcome the gospel of life. He would draw inspiration from each of the traditional religions, while eschewing their time-worn dogmas. Science and philosophy were working to-day to free men from restrictions of creeds and were helping to evolve a new social order with a new religion which Rabindranath Tagore called the religion of man.

What philosophy was doing in the realms of thought the World Congress was doing in the realms of understanding, inspiration, and action. It was grouping together men of all religions and helping them to discover the essentials of them all. Then, on that foundation, a common understanding and a common fellowship could be securely based. Our mental horizon had been widened by the discussions in the various Sessions. We had come to realise that religious inspiration came from the finer chords of life in the widest commonalty of spirit. Evolution proceeded on the principle of tension and elasticity. The tension on all sides of life had helped us to think in common terms and to foster friendly feelings. World Fellowship was emerging out of the very complexity of life to-day, and would help us to find the path of a finer emergence in universal consciousness and brotherhood. Universality was the demand of spirit, and whenever the stifling sense of extreme individualism oppressed us, spirit found spontaneous pathways for its own expression of universality. None could kill it. None could check it. For nothing was truer than spirit, and life was based upon and enjoyed this universality of spirit.

It had been a joy to see how, from day to day in



the Congress, all had patiently tried to understand the view-point of each faith and to strike the note of harmony running through all. Every faith had interested all, for each represented an expression of the spirit. The Congress commanded respect, for it emerged from a deep conviction and imperative necessity of human nature. It would help humanity to get rid of its narrow exclusiveness. That was evident in Canterbury, when for perhaps the first time in the history of that great Cathedral there was sounded from the pulpit the note of appreciation of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

In almost all the speeches at the Congress emphasis had been laid on the universal note, and not one antagonistic voice had been heard. True spirituality made the social organism move in harmony and rhythm, as had been well demonstrated in the day-to-day Sessions. The Congress had given birth to a new enthusiasm and a new understanding.

M. Denis Saurat, the Principal of the French Institute in London, said that he would try to sum up the lessons of the Congress, and more particularly as they appeared to himself who stood outside any faith which had so far been expressed. All who had taken part in organising the Congress had been struck by one important fact, namely, how much more response they got from the East than from Europe. Surely there was a great lesson behind this simple fact? Did it not mean that the East was more spiritual than the West? This was not to say that there was no spirituality in the West. Some of the elements of spirituality in the West were as precious as anything the East could bring us. Yet there was in the West a sort of timidity, a lack of courage, before spiritual matters which certainly did not exist in the East.

M. Saurat then proceeded to examine what each of

the great religions brought to men. Starting with the Far East as being probably the most spiritual part of the earth from which we had most to learn, what struck him was a certain quality of selflessness in the Buddhist religion which was perhaps beyond the reach of the rest of the world. If we suffered from one thing now in the West, we certainly suffered from the fact that neither as nations nor as individuals, nor even as the continent of Europe, could we put our self aside. Therefore the lesson of selflessness which Buddhists had tried to teach the world for several thousands of years was one which we seemed very much to need. Yet we should not all become Buddhists and adopt their creed, for we had also a fear that sometimes selflessness might be as dangerous as selfishness. Several forms of civilisation had lately been pushed upon Europe which demanded the suppression of the self in favour of something else—in favour of the State or of this or that. And we in the Far West were still dubious as to whether the sacrifice of the self was a good thing.

The Hindus gave us, as no other people, a feeling of the complication and the subtlety of the spiritual life. They had produced the subtlest metaphysicians and mystics and yet had never lost sight of unity. In showing the spiritual life as something extremely complicated and yet something which united everything that was, the Hindus taught a lesson which was peculiarly theirs but which we must take to heart, as we were apt to oversimplify religion.

In regard to Muslims, M. Saurat recalled how they termed themselves "the true believers"—how they insisted before everything else on this essential thing which was Belief. Belief in *what* was not so pressing with them as with us. The Muslim put his emphasis on

the quality of faith,—on the quality of belief in itself. He did not mean that Muslims had not considered what they should believe in, but that for them the very essence of religion lay in this power of faith. And here also we had much to learn from the East.

Nearer again, we came to the Jews. What did we owe to them? We might better ask, religiously speaking, what did we not owe to them? Peculiarly theirs was a feeling of the presence of the Divine such as no other religion had. With the Jews, from the great Prophets downwards, their strongest feeling was of God as a living God. M. Saurat said he had known Jews of the highest spiritual rank who had become atheists but who yet had the deep feeling of something which was beyond mankind. Some of them were communists, some were anti-communists. Yet in them all was this deep feeling of the presence of something urgent that mankind had to attend to. The Jews had also kept the sense of mystery that went with the Presence. The difference between God and man was to them a terrible mystery. And that also was a religious lesson they had given us.

Coming to the Christians, M. Saurat said that the most important contribution which they brought was a sense of reality. However spiritual a thing might be, it was of no good if it was not true. Many in the East had forgotten that. The task of Europe was to bring this sense of reality into the religious life of the world. With this would go the very necessary critical spirit and also—what was much wanting in the East—a sense of the value of personality, of that which made the difference between one thing and another, between one soul and another.

Then he referred briefly to the many new Faiths, each of which had a special angle from which it looked at life and each of which could bring a lesson to the world.

Nor did he omit mention of the agnostics. He referred to Tennyson's lines on the "more faith in honest doubt", and to Samuel Butler's introversion: "There is more doubt in honest faith than most people realise." In their own way these also bore witness.

M. Saurat then addressed himself to the specific problem before the Congress, namely, how we were to combine all these elements. The answer existed in each religion if it were pushed far enough. Most people knew only a fragment of their respective religious systems. What they now had to do was to pursue their studies so as to reach as far as their systems would go—as far as the best mind who had expressed themselves within that system had thought and written. People in each religious system who were opposed to each other and who could not see how to unite with the others belonged, so to speak, to the lower classes or the middle classes of that system. If we would really get to the top in any given religious system we should come to the answer to our problem. When we got to the highest, whether it was among Catholic mystics or among the followers of Zen Buddhism at the other end of the world, if we left aside a certain number of peculiarities which belonged to each race the result would not be so far from the synthesis we desired.

Following a similar line of thought, M. Saurat said that it had been his lot, through his own highly specialised profession, to come into contact with other people who were also highly specialised, and he had noticed that those others—if they had driven their spirit of investigation far enough into their subject—would come to a kind of common ground; so that the man who had studied chemistry, if he had studied it deeply enough, would somewhere meet the student of history, if he also

had studied deeply enough. Perhaps this would serve to show what might be done in the spiritual world. It was by each of us studying and pushing forward that line of approach that happened to be ours, that we should progress. If we drove it on with enough spirit, with enough intelligence, with enough perseverance, we should reach beyond to something which would be universal. It was not by giving up what was peculiar to each one of us that progress would be made, but by elaborating it, by perfecting it, by making it much more subtle, more complicated and yet at the same time more simple, that we should reach beyond to something which would be valid for all mankind.

At the close of this illuminating address by M. Saurat there occurred an incident which was both more trying to me and more deeply appreciated by me than I can well say. Sir Herbert Samuel, on behalf of the members of the Congress, presented me with a gold watch. The Congress had meant so much to me in the inward parts and I am there so sensitive that I could scarcely bear the strain of emotion. But I most sincerely meant it when I said that, great as had been that moment in my life when the Regent at Lhasa presented me with a figure of Buddha and I could feel that I had succeeded in turning former enemies into friends, this moment was greater far. The moment of bringing to a successful conclusion so high an adventure as organising a World Congress of Faiths is as great a moment as any man could have in a lifetime.

Continuing this final series of addresses, Mr. Yusaf Ali, speaking as a Muslim, said that critics had predicted

that this Congress must end in confusion and disorder. After a fortnight of steady work we saw that those critics were wrong. But had the dream of the dreamers come true? He was an *habitué* of Congresses. He had attended political Congresses, educational Congresses, racial Congresses, religious Congresses, but in all sincerity he could say that the experience he had gained with men and women from different lands at this Congress was one which he would never forget. He would sum up the objects of the Congress in three phrases: first, to create an atmosphere; second, to show the oneness of human faith and human hope; thirdly, to create contacts and provide a basis for future work. We had succeeded in the first two objects and we should try to achieve the third in the near future. We had created an atmosphere in which we could live and breathe a new life, in which our faith itself would become sanctified because it would meet the faith of other men and find to its intense joy that all faiths were one. That atmosphere, he hoped, would remain with all members of the Congress and extend to ever-widening circles. In regard to the oneness of human faith, hope, and life, he would say that religion was not confined to any one sphere of human activity. It included economics; it included politics; it included art; it included science: it included, in fact, all the various activities of the human body, mind and soul, because only by such inclusion could we realise the wholeness and oneness of life. Everything that concerned humanity was the concern of our spiritual thought and care; and if we could purify our individual life, our political life, and our international life we should find in that vast concord the finest realisation of religion.

In the West men tried to redress some specific wrongs and to express right in some specific formula. But if

we always confined ourselves to specific points and specific formulæ and looked for mathematical precision in our ideas of philosophy and religion, we should be disappointed. We should produce a picture that was not true, because the human heart and soul dealt with things that were as beautiful as rainbow colours and as elusive as clouds at sunset. If any thought that such indefiniteness was of no value, they should remember that after all the human mind and spirit found its best and most precious possessions in those undefined thoughts and feelings, those aims and purposes which could not be translated into immediate action but which yet lived because they had greater vitality than the things of ordinary life.

It was quite easy to be restless and mechanical, to do things quickly and so that their result might be immediately apparent. But serenity was perhaps the final fruit of our best activities and of our best religious understanding.

M. Marcault, in drawing the proceedings to a close, said that he had been commissioned by a considerable number of members of the Congress to express the wish that its work should not end there—that there should remain some organisation which would keep the faiths of the world united and remind the world that, if there were various religious climates, there was only one sun whose light, whose heat, and whose colour lent beauty to all climates.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN



### RESULTS AND IMPRESSIONS

SUMMING UP THE RESULTS OF THE CONGRESS AND THE impression made at least upon myself, I should say that keen spiritual enjoyment was the chief result. My main impression was that members enjoyed themselves in no ordinary way : they had a sense of being raised to a higher level of life. They had eagerly looked forward to seeing, hearing and conversing with distinguished men of other religions than their own, with wise men from the East and cultured philosophers from the West. Such a meeting would be a new experience. But the result far exceeded their expectations. There was not merely the pleasure of personal contact with interesting men. In addition, and above all, there was the stimulating atmosphere which was produced by the Congress as a whole, by its Public Meetings, its formal Sessions and discussions, its daily Devotional Meetings, its informal Group Meetings, and its opportunities for intimate social intercourse. This it was which gave the sense of exaltation beyond what any had anticipated and which, in my view, was incomparably the most valuable achievement of the Congress.

The reason why I attach so much importance to this spiritual enjoyment is that it gave a new spring and a new hope to men. They had seen possibilities—boundless possibilities—and they were filled with a great hope. With great faith too, the same sure faith in goodness that scientists have in order. Just as scientists pin their faith on all things being in order, so did those at the



Congress pin their faith on things being governed for good. They felt a great gladness in their hearts. They went about telling their friends of what they had experienced. Their friends began to wish that they, too, could see something of the Congress ; and that was why, with practically no advertisement, the Queen's Hall was filled on the fourth evening. That was, also, why on that last evening the Chairman, a Frenchman and not one of the organisers of the Congress, expressed the very general wish that its work might continue. Members felt that together they had achieved something so valuable that they could not allow it to vanish like a mist : they wanted it to endure. What they had accomplished once they would accomplish again. They would create a permanent body for the spirit which they had temporarily engendered.

Now if such deep satisfaction were obtained by participating in a Congress of this kind, that fact shows it was fulfilling an urgent need of the times. Evidently people were really wanting to hear of other religions—to hear men of different faiths discussing a world-problem like : how the spirit of world fellowship might best be promoted. The need was there and it was high time that it was supplied.

The answer to the problem before the Congress was given by the Congress itself. The way to promote a spirit of world fellowship was to get together representative men of the different faiths and, while recognising and welcoming the differences between them, see how they could best unite, and on a common basis pursue a common purpose. At the Congress very different points of view were expressed, yet all realised that there was common ground between them. Going down to the roots of their respective faiths, members came to see

that all sprang from a belief in the spirituality of things and all aspired to whatever things were lovely and of good report. They might have different conceptions of God, but all were convinced that the world was governed by a Power which was making for good, and that this same spirit ran through all men, uniting them in one flesh.

Imbued with this spirit and feeling the responsibility of the occasion, members carried on the discussions with unfailing good temper. As I have said already, it had been prophesied that if men of different religions were brought together on the same platform acrimonious debate would assuredly take place. Nothing of the sort occurred. The bigness of the occasion made itself felt. Spiritual good manners prevailed. There were times when fiery words must have risen to the tip of the tongue. But they were not uttered. And here came another good result of the Congress: it created a spirit of charity. When one member saw another ardently, wholeheartedly, and intelligently expounding a certain view, he might profoundly disagree with the speaker, yet he would be forced to acknowledge that anyhow for the speaker that was the truth. He would restrain his irritation. He would bring his sense of charity into play and, if he had to speak, would speak at least with courtesy. One such occasion arose when a Christian had been laying down that Christianity was the one and only true religion and a Muslim had risen to say that it had been superseded by Islam. What might have been a nasty situation passed off peacefully, partly through the quite courteous, and indeed almost matter of fact, way in which the Muslim made his remark, and partly through the good nature of the audience who were anxious to hear every point of view expressed.

In the nature of things the addresses given varied in

degree of excellence. Some, like Berdiaeff's and Radhakrishnan's, were of the highest excellence. Others were less good. So also with the discussions. Yet none were not worth the hearing, and incidents of value kept arising at each of the Sessions.

I had the good fortune to be able to listen to every word that was spoken, as I was on the platform at all the Sessions. But what was almost as interesting as listening to the papers was meeting the men themselves. And we had hoped that there would have been more possibility of this personal contact. We had originally intended to transfer the Congress to an Oxford College for a week. Living there together and having our meals together would have afforded greater opportunity for this mutual intercourse. Yet even in London we did have certain facilities. And these were most necessary, because while some things may be more easily said in public at a great gathering of people, other things can only be said in strictest privacy. With Indians especially it is not natural to speak on religion to vast audiences. What they prefer is the more intimate association with a guru—a religious teacher—in a small circle. Indians have great delicacy of feeling in this matter. For example, one of them present at the Congress, and through deficiency in his knowledge of English not able to take much part in the debates, approached me privately and after talking for some time leant forward, just touched me on the knee, and in a half-whisper asked me a question of a very sacred character; and when I nodded assent he merely nodded back with a deeply pleased expression, and nothing more was said. We understood each other—and understood each other right down at the base. What more was required? That is how fellowship was really established.

The Devotional Meetings held every morning before the Sessions commenced were an invaluable aid in the same direction. The Botanical Theatre at University College had been so arranged as to have something of the appearance of a place of worship. At 10.15 every morning the leader of worship for the day, accompanied by Dr. Kolisko and Baron von Veltheim, would make their appearance. One day the service would be Hindu, another day Buddhist, another Muslim, and so on ; and the texts and prayers, translated into English and printed, would be circulated beforehand. Of necessity the prayers used and the verses quoted from the various sacred scriptures were so chosen as to be acceptable to persons of other faiths. But this did not mean that innocuous, colourless extracts had been selected. It meant that the representatives of each religion had searched for those texts which expressed the fundamentals with which all would be in sympathy. And the impression I gained on attending one after another of these Devotional Meetings was of a great yearning of man the world over for the worthiest things in life. Regarding those meetings as a whole, I had the impression that men of these varying faiths from many countries all felt themselves in the presence of some mysterious Power whose aid they were imploring in their effort to keep from evil and attain not merely the good but the very highest good they could imagine. With each leader of the Meeting, as he threw his whole soul out in prayer and aspiration, I could feel myself in communion—and through him with his religion. Each personified, for the moment, the deepest yearning of millions of present-day Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, or Christians ; and of many more millions in the past. The prayers they prayed, the words they read, had come out of the souls of the most spiritual

men of the past, and through thousands of years had been accepted and adopted by millions of followers as most adequately expressing what they themselves were feeling. All who attended these Devotional Meetings were filled with reverence at this revelation of the human soul in communion with the Divine, and felt a link being forged between them and followers of the other faiths. They, like ourselves, were reaching in their own way, after the Divinest things in life.

What, then, of the personalities of the principal figures? Four stood out pre-eminently: the Japanese Buddhist Suzuki, the Hindu Radhakrishnan, the Russian Berdiaeff, and the English Lord Allen.

Suzuki was undoubtedly the one who charmed the Congress most. All loved him. He had a most attractive, unassuming, humble way with him. He was not the Great Teacher on a lofty pedestal laying down the law to us misguided mortals below. He was not even the man in the pulpit. He was the man in the pew,—the humble searcher after the best. He was one who liked others to come along with him in the search, and would willingly share with them what he had so far found. But he would also like to enjoy whatever others had experienced. Perhaps there was a tinge of depression in his outlook on the world. Anyhow, the world is all the better for having men like him in it; and to give us this sense of serenity and enjoyment of the simple things in life I hope he felt that his whole long journey from Japan was well worth while.

Radhakrishnan was also attractive, but in quite another way. He charmed by his brilliance. He had the air of representing the Hindus' thousands of years' experience in spiritual things. He inspired confidence

through his own assurance. He stood up before a Queen's Hall audience and in perfect English, without a pause or a single reference to any notes, delivered a most telling address. There was never any attempt at oratory or even at emphasis on special points. Yet all he said was clear and reasoned and reasonable. And both in public and in private he gave the impression that his whole life had the finest spiritual basis.

Quite different again was Berdiaeff. Here was a man who had gone through great tribulation, who had had his faith tested in the sternest trials. What he said was the result of hard thought indeed, but still more of hard experience. And off the platform, in quiet conversation, he was like a deep well open for all and sundry to draw from. His wisdom was profound; and it was not tightly guarded behind bars: it was free for anyone to take. Perhaps he had a touch of the Russian inclination to melancholy; and considering what he had gone through that was not astonishing. But he had also that precious Russian gift of expression and the easy Russian way of one with another.

Another striking figure of the Congress was Lord Allen. He seemed to represent those who had most earnestly sought and who had, in fact found, but who were not yet sure that they had. With frail physique and suffering from a devastating illness, he had fought his way at all costs through all hindrances to higher things, and his lined spiritual face showed what he had gone through physically and mentally. He had none of the self-complacency of those who have satisfied themselves that they have risen above the common herd. He gave us the impression that he, like us, was still in the upward struggle.

Collectively, similar differences were observable. I

have already noted the keenness with which Indians responded to the idea of the Congress. The same keenness was evident during its progress. They were in their element in such surroundings. They attended regularly. They listened attentively. They debated well. And they entered into the whole spirit of the proceedings. The Muslims were perhaps not so acutely interested as the Hindus. Yet they, too, took a worthy part. The Chinese took very little part. Such a Congress did not attract them. Those who came, came only for their allotted parts and otherwise did not attend the Congress. Christian Ministers also took very little part. Roman Catholics took none: it was against their principles to consort on terms of anything like equality with adherents of other religions. Ministers of the Church of England were scarcely less aloof; though two delivered addresses they did not share in the discussions. The luke-warmness on the part of the Church was noticeable.

This attitude seemed strange to me. For the Church makes gallant efforts to convert "the heathen", and I have long admired those efforts and the splendid men the Church sends into the mission field. Yet when these men of other faiths come here to England itself, the Church loses the splendid opportunity of influencing them. There would not have been the slightest chance of converting these non-Christians—Radhakrishnan, Suzuki, or Sir Abdul Qadir—into formally baptised Christians. But there is a high probability that they might have been deeply influenced by such an address as the Archbishop of Canterbury is capable of giving, and by such free and courteous discussion on the various addresses as took place in the Congress. Hindus are peculiarly absorptive. Those present would not have abandoned their own



*Art Photo Service*

DR. SUZUKI

*Buddhist*





Hinduism. But they would readily have taken in what a Christian Minister had to offer, if that Minister were Christian down to the roots.

The cause of this Church compunction must have been either that Christians had nothing to gain from non-Christians, or that Christians had something to lose from mixing with them. The Church had "the Truth" and to listen to anything but this Truth would be to throw men into doubt and perplexity. For my own part, the impression left upon me by the Congress was that it deepened each man in his own faith. By that I do not mean that it made each man fanatically bigoted. I mean the exact reverse. The Hindu was made all the better a Hindu, the Muslim all the better a Muslim, and the Christian all the better a Christian. Each was driven down to his foundations—down to where he had perhaps never reached before. Each sought the permanent and abiding amid the great diversity of gifts. No Christian who attended that Congress was the worse for it. And it is quite conceivable that many missionaries would have been all the better for this unprecedented opportunity of meeting and hearing exponents of those other religions among the followers of which they were intending to work. Indeed, considering how very ignorant ordinary Christian clergymen are of any other religion than their own, it is surprising that they did not flock to the Congress in their hundreds.

Perhaps they feared that the Congress meant to evolve a new religion—some kind of eclectic religion made up of the best parts in each, a synthesis of them all. But such an intention had been expressly disclaimed in our preliminary notice. Attempts of that kind have been made before, but none with any great success. And the feeling I had from the Congress was that religion,

taken as a whole, benefited much from the variety in its different forms. All the centuries that the spirit of God had been working in Christians, it must also have been working in Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and others. That spirit was being manifested in a great variety of ways. And recognising this all-important fact, members of the Congress showed no disposition to try and form any new religion: rather were they inclined to draw inspiration from others for the development of their own.

## CHAPTER TWENTY



### THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

THOUGH THE IDEA OF GOD WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY notified as a subject for discussion, it was continually arising in the course of debate. Certainly the persons chosen, whether to deliver addresses, or lead the debates, or take the Chair, were spiritually-minded and such as might be likely to believe in the existence of God. But for the most part they were not Ministers of Religion. They were laymen who had of their own free will and independent thought come to whatever views they had upon God. Besides these selected speakers, any member of the Congress could, in the course of debate, criticise opinions expressed and was perfectly free to state his own views. And in the informal Group Meetings held in the late afternoon after the formal Sessions these views were, as a matter of fact, expressed with the utmost possible candour. No definite conclusion was, of course, reached. The conception of God will be a subject for discussion in innumerable meetings for countless ages to come.

How God must be conceived of is a problem of extreme complexity, and no final decision will ever be reached ; for the subject is inexhaustible. Nevertheless, men's efforts will not be wasted. By continually striving to form in our minds a clearer and ever clearer conception of whatever may be the Motive Power which actuates the universe and of how we ourselves are affected by it, we shall better know how to comport ourselves in the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed. And

now, in summing up the results of the Congress, the utmost I can do is to state the impression left upon me after listening to all the formal and many of the informal debates and adjusting what I there heard to the conclusion at which I had myself arrived after fifty years of thought.

I think, in the first place, that we should go a little further back—a little deeper down—than trying to conceive of the nature of God. We should begin by enquiring into the real character of the world we live in. What is the ultimate nature of things? For example: is the world simply a gigantic machine grinding on utterly regardless of the feelings and aspirations of us insignificant men? And are we mere cogs in the wheels of this machine, without any say or voice in what we are being used to shape? Or, again, is the universe ultimately and essentially material—physical and chemical? And are human loves and strivings mere temporary effervescences which will soon subside as physical heat and cold and chemical combinations exert their final dominant power? These are the questions we have first to ask and answer before we consider the nature of God.

Astronomers, especially, are apt to give an impression of the insignificance of man and the fleeting nature of his existence in the universe. Narrowly confined as they are to a study of physical and chemical conditions—and to those conditions alone—they are prone to attach importance to mere physical bulk. This planet is of inconceivable minuteness in comparison with the colossal magnitude of the whole starry universe and man is only a tiny speck even on this tiny planet. Moreover, the sun's heat will give out in the course of time and man will then be frozen out of existence. How insignificant, therefore, is he! Clearly, physical conditions in the end alone decide. So thinks the astronomer, wearing his

blinkers and seeing nothing outside physics and chemistry.

But those who are under no necessity to wear blinkers, but who are free to see things as a whole and take all aspects into consideration, come to a very different conclusion. They would accept all the astronomers have to tell about the magnitude of the universe, the number and distance of the stars, and the immense periods of time occupied in their evolution. But they would point to the connexity of things. Even physically all things are connected together in a whole. Light comes to the earth from *nebulæ* so distant that, travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles in every second, it takes hundreds of millions of years in its passage ; yet it does eventually reach us, as it reaches every other part of the universe, thus showing the connexity of things in the physical universe.

Moreover, things are not only interconnected ; they are organically connected. Each part, however minute, contributes to and affects the whole, as the whole contributes to and affects each part. The universe is an organic whole made up of lesser wholes and those of still lesser wholes,—each a part of the universe as a whole and each itself composed of parts. In this view, each of the lesser wholes would in some degree reflect the character of the universal whole. They would form part of it and be constantly and continually affected by it. In that case man, as a part of the universe, born out of it and through every instant of his existence affected by it, would give us an indication of the essential character of the universe. If the universe has produced man, its essential character must be manifested in some degree in at least the essential character of man. It may be something higher ; but it cannot be anything less. And on this

line of argument, instead of looking upon the universe as essentially material—ultimately ruled by physical and chemical conditions—and upon man as a temporary, casual and insignificant by-product soon to be obliterated and forgotten, we should regard the universe as essentially spiritual. We should look upon it in its material aspect as being on an inconceivably colossal scale what man is on a minute scale. But we should also regard it as being what man is—a living organism possessed of mind and spirit.

As to the notion that the universe is a mere machine ; anything less like cogs than the speakers at the Congress one could not imagine. True, men feel themselves held tightly within certain very definite limits, and so far they may be like cogs on a wheel. They cannot, by taking thought, add one cubit to their stature, or even diminish it. They may, it is true, curtail their lives, but they cannot increase them. With every effort of science no man could be made to live the very paltry period of 150 years. He has these and other limitations, yet he realises that within these fixed boundaries he does have a power of choice. He is not a pure automaton. He can choose whether he will be a soldier, a sailor, or a candlestick-maker. And if he prefers the last, he can choose whether he will exercise the best capacities with which he is endowed in order to make the candlesticks true works of art, or whether he will not exert himself to turn out more than bare candle-holders. Also, he has ample choice as to what he shall do with his leisure when his work is over—whether he shall give it up to shallow frivolity or whether he shall take the trouble to enjoy worth-while things. There, most assuredly, is the power of choice, and if men have that power they cannot be regarded as cogs on the wheel of a machine. Nor, if the universe

produces beings with this power of choice, can it be regarded as a machine.

It seems, then, more reasonable than unreasonable to conclude that the universe is a living universe, that it is in macrocosm what a man is in microcosm, that just as when we look at a man we see only the material form yet know that that is merely the outward aspect and that behind it is a mind and spirit, so also we believe that behind the outward material appearance of the universe, such as astronomers are alone concerned with, there is a universal mind and spirit.

At any rate for me personally the most reasonable view is to regard the universe as one vast living being out of which I was born, in which I always remain, and of which I am an active constituent part. The universe, in fact, bears to me, and I bear to the universe, the same relationship that I bear to each cell in my body and that each cell bears to me. We know from science that each of us is composed of millions of millions of cells—microscopic organisms of great complexity in spite of their diminutive size. Each of these cells is a living organism capable of assimilation, growth, and decay. Each has rudimentary indications of mind, in that it can select what is in accord with its requirements and reject what is harmful. And some millions of them, known as germ-cells, are so stamped with the image of the man of whom they are constituent parts that they are capable, in conjunction with similar germ-cells of a woman, of reproducing the human being in all his main characteristics, even to the colour of the eyes. Each man has helped to form those cells of which he is composed. On the other hand, they are constituent parts of him and have gone to form him. Similarly, the universe has formed me, but I remain a constituent



part of it, and as such go to form the universe. And on me is stamped the image of the universe as a whole. If I were to ask myself what the universe is like, I would say it is like me—or like any other man. But I would add that it is more like what I am when I am at my best—that is, when I am most completely and fully my real self—than what I am when I am relaxed and somnolent; and also that it is more like the most perfect men in their most perfect moments than it is like ordinary men in their ordinary moments.

And if the universe as a whole is for me like what I am to one of the microscopic cells of which I am composed, I may form some idea of the greatness of the “I” of the universe. Let anyone put himself in the place of one of the millions of cells which in their togetherness go to form him, and let him, as that microscopic cell, try to form an idea of that tremendous being—himself. Would not even his bodily size be inconceivably great to that microscopic cell? And would not the man himself, with his mind and his soul, be utterly beyond the comprehension of the little cell, even though it were stamped with his image and bore in it in embryo his main characteristics?

As one of those tiny cells of which I am made might struggle to know what I in my fulness was like, so am I now striving to know what the “I” of the universe is like. I am aware that I have stamped upon me the essential character of the universe, but strain as I might to the farthest stretch of my imagination, how should I ever be able to grasp what the soul of the universe is like in all its fulness? I may know that it is like me as I am at my best and that it is like the most perfect men in the height of their perfection. Yet I must also recognise that it is unimaginably *more*! With all our efforts we

could no more comprehend the "I" of the universe in its entirety than even a germ-cell in my body, stamped though it may be with my essential character, could ever know me.

Yet tremendous as the "I" of the universe may be, it may not be good, someone might argue. It may be neither good nor bad. It may be just gigantic intellect, cold and hard. The "I" may be a mere mathematician and nothing more, and therefore not such as the term God might be applied to. Or the "I" may be partly good and partly bad. I am made up of good and bad. And the "I" may be the same. It may be compounded of good and evil. Before we come to any conclusion we should therefore consider the dreadful problem of evil. With all the evil there is in the world and in ourselves, is it possible to think of the spirit of the universe as good? Can we apply to it the term God? Famines, earthquakes, plagues occur, carrying off good and bad with callous impartiality. The poor wife of an Indian villager may have been far better than the Maharaja, but she dies of hunger and the Maharaja in his palace survives. Again, a Maharaja in his palace may have been a saint of goodness, and a cattle-thief in the fields close by the quintessence of villainy. But the earthquake comes; the Maharaja is buried in the ruins of his palace and the cattle-thief in the open survives. When men are exposed to calamities of this kind, how can they have any confidence in the universe to which they belong and regard it as being governed for good? They may well doubt. Yet there is also the fact that they are endowed by the universe with faculties which are enabling them to cope with these calamities. With the spread of railways and roads famine is not now the terror that it was. Men are learning to construct fairly earthquake-proof houses.

And medical science is coping with disease. If there are evils, the spirit of man—derived from the spirit of the world—is rising to the occasion and learning to dispose of them. It is also permissible to suppose that in the long run this necessity of being prepared to meet death at any moment may be of service in keying up the race to the highest pitch of spiritual efficiency. Like explorers, or soldiers on active service, or expectant mothers, they must be ready for death at any moment and in a state of constant fitness to meet any emergency.

As to those evils of man's own making—the wars, the jealousies, hatreds and suspicions, robberies and murders—they too must come out of the heart of the universe. How then can we regard the spirit which animates the universe as good? Perhaps if we take a wide and long view of these things we may regard them as part of what Radhakrishnan describes as the soul of the world in travail to be born. The human race, we now know from science, is very, very young. It is at most one million years of age and that, in comparison with other species of the animal kingdom, is young. The race may not be really grown up for another ten million years yet. And what we are going through now is the travail of the soul of mankind bursting its way through its enfoldments that it may come to expression.

Or the present evil happenings may be like what goes on in ourselves when the higher self struggles with the lower self. The lower self in us is that "animal" part which we have inherited from the animals but which we are trying to shake off. The higher self is that nobler part which we have also inherited from the animals and which has been pushing its way through in the whole long process of evolution.

If, then, there is evil as well as good in the world,

we should not merely weigh the one against the other in a balance. The good may be something more than a counter-weight to the evil. It may be a transforming power. It may be constantly striving to work its way through to expression. It may be like that of which we each have experience—the higher self ever struggling against the lower. The evil may even be a means of evoking and strengthening the good.

In spite, then, of the evil in the world, we are still free to consider the mighty “I” of the universe as good—as what corresponds to the real self, the best self, in each one of us. And the history of this planet shows how this power for good has steadily worked its way through. Two thousand million years ago the earth was a mere drop of fiery liquid from the sun. One thousand million years ago some specks of it had been endowed with life. One million years ago those living specks had developed into primitive man. And now, to-day, if we are not yet saints, we are at least an improvement on the men of the jungle and have in us a sense of the better things we have yet to make.

But before we can begin to understand the “I” of the universe in anything approaching His amplitude, we have to reflect that on planets of other stars than our own may be living beings of an intelligence and spirituality as much higher than ours as ours is higher than a monkey’s. Astronomers give us the impression that in all the rest of the universe there is nothing but blazing suns. And biologists have not yet taken up the question of life on the planets of other stars than our own. But, as I have tried to show in my “Life in the Stars” and “The Living Universe”, it is difficult to believe that life arose on this planet unless it had already existed elsewhere in the universe. To suppose that life arose here

by a happy chance collocation of atoms is ridiculous. Nowadays, when the connexity of things is continually being emphasised and when we are so accustomed to receiving mental impressions through the radio, it is not difficult to conjecture that it was as a result of impressions ceaselessly raining in upon this planet from the universe at large that life arose here. The fact that life has arisen and developed here seems to me proof that it had existed previously elsewhere in the universe. And the conclusion I draw from what philosophy and science have to say about the universe is that on many planets of the millions of millions of stars there must be living beings—and living beings with some kind of material bodies. We find life in extraordinary variety on this planet, under the water, on land, under the ground, and in the air. And beings on these other planets may be of yet altogether different forms from anything here, with bodies composed of different chemical elements. Yet they may be living beings and intelligent beings. And while some may be only of the intelligence of our lowliest creatures, others may be of an intelligence and a spirituality higher than anything of which we have yet any experience.

Thus it is that I have come to have in my mind the conception of a living universe and an inhabited universe rather than a universe of sheer materiality. And as I listened to the discussions I kept thinking how inadequate was any conception of God which did not take into account the possibility that this is not the only inhabited planet in our stupendous universe. This universe, I would regard as in an unceasing process of change about a central unchanging core. For it does not show change of the kaleidoscopic nature: its changes are actuated by a central motive. And they are rhythmic in their character. Rhythm is of the very essence of the universe.

For these reasons, as I have elsewhere explained, I regard the whole universe as in one vast rhythmic motion—not “running down” to a final heat death as some astronomers have tried to persuade us, nor in circular motion coming round and round to the same point again and again, but in rhythmic waves or undulations from everlasting to everlasting. While things were tending to winter in one part they would be tending to summer in another, while the more intelligent beings on one planet, say of Sirius, were passing from their zenith, the intelligent beings on this planet of our sun would be progressing towards theirs some millions of years hence. There would be unceasing waxing and waning and waxing again but always somewhere in the universe there would be a crest of the wave—a supreme expression of the undying Central Spirit.

So the “I” of the universe—that universal “I” which stands to me as I stand to one of the myriad cells of which I am composed—is what, in my view, is God. It most certainly has personality, but personality of an order surpassing all any man can possibly conceive; and for it the term “Father” is quite inadequate and in a way misleading. For we are not separate from God as a child is from its father: we remain in God and God remains in us, as a cell in my body remains in me and I remain in it. God is also spoken of as love; but love too, as we know it, is far too thin and paltry a term for that spirit which issues from the “I” of the universe. Again we speak of Might, Majesty and Dominion, but these must be wholly beneath the attributes of the actual “I” of the universe.

When we look upon a Himalayan giant we are overpowered with a sense of its physical magnitude. Bodily we are hopelessly insignificant in comparison. But from

gazing on that mountain we can in some degree measure the magnitude of the personality of God in comparison with our own. We may surmise that He is spiritually as much greater than we are as the mountain is greater than our physical bodies.

But it is perhaps through that precious quality of holiness that we approach nearest to a true conception of God. When we think of the holiness of a little child, of the holiness in the love of man and woman for one another in the acme of their bliss, of the holiness of a mother's love for her new-born child, and think of these at their finest, then we may get an inkling of the holiness in the heart of things. In the deep mysterious heart of the world there must be a Holiness which includes but transcends the highest we know of love and beauty as surely as the glory of a sunset surpasses every man-made light.

Some small measure of this Holiness even we may know. We are endowed with certain organs for sensing what is happening in the world about us. Certain vibrations impinge upon our eyes. They are transmitters of light and we see. Other vibrations impinge upon our ears. They are the bearers of sound and we hear. And with instruments we can extend the effectiveness of those organs. Through telescopes we can see immense distances, through microscopes see minute objects, and through the radio we can hear what is said on the other side of the world. But we have yet another capacity for knowing the world about us. It may be called the organ of the soul. By means of it a great painter or a great poet may see beauties in Nature and in the poignant drama of life with its heartrending conflict of loyalties and alternating joys and sorrows that we ordinary men and women may not observe. And in seeing those

beauties they see far into the nature of God. Others also there are whose organ of soul is by natural endowment and by exercise and training peculiarly sensitive, and these may see the beauty of holiness. And in seeing that thing of rarest value they may have seen even further than the poets and the painters into the heart of God.

Moreover, these seers, having seen, yearn to communicate to others something of the joy which the vision of beauty has brought them. Merely to have enjoyed it is not enough. They would have the whole world share their enjoyment. Through poems, through pictures, through lives lived in the spirit of what they have seen, they strive to convey their joy to the world. And it is through these in especial that each of us may be stirred to form for himself a true conception of God.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE



### PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS

THE MAIN CONCLUSION I CAME TO WAS THAT ULTIMATELY the basis on which fellowship, and especially world fellowship, should be founded must be religion, but that the religion on which it must be based should be continually purified and constantly renewed. No mere ethical code, no political action, no improved economic conditions, no swifter means of communication, nor all these together, would make up for want of religion at the foundation of men's lives. But the religion which would thus be made the base of everything must be no mere priestcraft, or empty ceremonial, or conformity to conventional tradition: it must be real religion, self-acquired and profoundly felt. It should give men an acute sense of their unity with one another and with a universe which is spiritual in its nature and governed for good. Faith in the goodness of things should be the bedrock of their lives—the inner spring from which every action is impelled.

But if religion is to be the deep fountain-source of our whole life-activity it must be of our own making. We must satisfy ourselves of its truth. And we must go on re-making it all through our lives, year after year deepening, reforming, amplifying, enriching it.

We shall have to make our lives conform to the greater conception of the world which is now emerging. As we the better realise the greatness of the universe, not only in physical bulk but in spiritual quality, we shall be longing to adjust our lives the better to it and

align ourselves the closer with its central purpose. We shall want something more than the skin-deep knowledge of the universe that the physical sciences give. We shall want that intuitive understanding of essentials which the organ of the soul alone can reach.

This will mean that we shall have to amplify our religion to meet expanding requirements. We shall need greater religion. Not *a* greater religion. Not any *new* religion. But greater Christianity, greater Hinduism, greater Islam. As has been already quoted from Radhakrishnan, the world is in travail of soul. It is in the throes of giving birth to real soul-satisfying religion. It is reaching out to bring into being what will be a stand-by to both nations and individuals, uphold them in the afflictions and complexities of life, and do still more—inspire all their activities in the home and the world, in politics, in business, in art, and set them aspiring Everest-ward.

I believe that it is such greater religion that men not only need but long for. The faintest inkling that it is in sight sets them aglow. It is the only thing that will really satisfy and make them happy. But, as it seems to me, each religion must build up on its own natural foundation. It must strike its roots down deeper into the soil from which it sprang, reach up higher into the air and sunshine which surround it, so that it may blossom out in fullest radiance. The soil into which all religions strike is the same; it is the soil of Mother Earth. And all derive their warmth and light from the same source—the sun. But Mother Earth herself was once part of the glowing sun. Only the climates differ. Here the climate is temperate and religion flowers as a rose; there it is humid and hot and religion flowers as

an orchid ; elsewhere again it is dry and burning, and religion develops like a hardy shrub, beautiful in its plain simplicity. Each has its own attractive power and fulfils its own purpose. And all contribute to the beauty on the face of Mother Earth.

I have in me an ineradicable streak of loyalty to my native religion and like to consider myself a Christian. In the life of Christ there is a sense of humanity, of compassion, of joy and gladness, of peace and good-will towards men which endears it to me. Also, the concrete embodiments of this spirit greatly impress me. First and foremost the lives of my own dear father and mother ; then saintly souls one meets who are the very embodiment of holiness, missionaries dedicating their whole lives to propagating the Gospel, parish priests giving themselves completely to work in the slums, workers in hospitals and schools all striving to elevate the lowest and bring health and light to the bodies and souls of men. These, and the work that has been and is being done in liberating slaves and, in general, improving the lot of the under-dog, greatly impress me, and will prevent my ever wanting to be anything else but a Christian.

But this loyalty to Christianity is strained almost to breaking point by the air of superiority so often adopted by Christian leaders in their attitude towards men of other religions, as when I hear the Head of one of the great branches of the Christian Church insisting that Christianity is the *only* religion for India, China and Africa ; when after stating that Western civilisation is dissolving ancient religion in India, destroying the past and all inherited customs and beliefs, he declares that to survive

and control the shock a religion must be found and that religion can only be found in Christianity ; when, on reviewing the position in China, he says that the only religion which could survive the shock of dissolution and hold its own in a new China is Christianity—when he insists in this way on Christianity being the only religion which can revive India and China. For in India, at least, I have seen both Hinduism and Islam reforming themselves. And I know that leading Hindus and Muslims are just as much impressed by the failure of Christianity in Europe during the last twenty years as any Christian is by the failure of Hinduism or Islam in India. The essential spirit of Jesus as it arose and spread in Palestine nineteen centuries ago must and will spread all over the world ; but that all Indians and Chinese should become Roman Catholic Christians or Church of England Christians is, I should say, neither likely nor desirable. I believe, indeed, that any Pope of Rome or any Archbishop of Canterbury would find inspiration from a Hindu like Ramakrishna or a Muslim like the Bab. And Christians might well reflect that God must always have been working and must always be working in non-Christians as well as in Christians, and that it is ultimately to God that all men's eyes should be directed.

This is all the more necessary because it has been said of Christians that they are apt to make Jesus hide God instead of revealing Him. They bring Jesus so prominently into the foreground that God cannot be seen. This I believe to be a great impediment in the way of our entering into the spirit of God and a hindrance in the way of non-Christians approaching us. Whereas if what we know of the life and character of Jesus were made use of as a means to that nearer understanding of God for

which Christians and non-Christians alike are striving, we and they would inevitably draw together.

What, then, is the position? Jesus was the very embodiment of the essential spirit of the universe—the very incarnation of God. In him was revealed the real character of God. He was a clear manifestation of the spirit of love in God. If we wanted to say what the universe was like in its fundamental nature, we should say that it was like Jesus. I have tried in my little book “The Reign of God” to make use of the life of Jesus as a means of understanding God. It is my view that at the moment which we know as his baptism by the Holy Ghost he did touch absolute perfection. He was at that instant imbued to perfection with the ultimate spirit of the universe. It entered into him and he entered into it. He was then a perfect incarnation of God. And it behoves us, as his followers, to recapture that moment and impart to others what of it we may have been privileged to enjoy. We may, like Jesus, see the Divine in every single human being,—see the radiant possibilities in each. And we may, like him, be filled with a great compassion for our fellows and long to bring life to them and bring it more abundantly, fill them with joy and gladness, and in company with them build up that kingdom of heaven upon earth of which a little child may be taken as a pattern.

I believe that in this way we shall not detract from Christianity. We shall make it more Christian. In any case, our aim as Christians should be to raise it to the nth degree. It must penetrate deeper and aspire higher. It must appeal to men with some far more inspiring call than that Christ died for them; men in millions have died for their country within our own times, and all of us are presumably ready to do the same. Men need,

too, a more uplifting symbol than an instrument of torture. Through a deeper understanding of the spirit of Christ we shall reach a more intimate understanding and a more penetrating knowledge of the nature of God. Then we shall realise that God is much more than a Father. Father indeed He may be in the sense that He created us, but Mother also, in the sense that out of Her we were born ; and far closer to us than either Father or Mother in the sense that God always remains in us and we always remain in Him, in the same way that a Frenchman, though he is born out of his Fatherland (or Motherland as he may like to style France) always has France in him, remains always in France, and always goes to the making of France.

For this reason men are much more intimately related to us than brothers are to each other. The relationship between us is more than a blood-relationship ; it is a spiritual kinship. All together are animated by the Divine Spirit.

When we are thoroughly imbued with this new sense of a much more intimate relationship both with God and with man, we shall develop a more compassionate compassion. It will be agony to us that any should not be sharing not merely wealth—for that is not particularly important—but those joys of the spirit which may be obtained even out of the very heart of suffering. Life of undreamed-of abundance we shall bring, and with it the joy of angels. For our misdeeds and defaults we shall have to suffer, and suffer more acutely than by the physical torture of a crucifixion. Our good deeds will be their own reward. That reward will be seeing the kingdom of God arise not in a far-off place and at a remote time, but here upon earth and now in the present. And we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we our-

selves are helping to build it and that we shall be built into its fabric and so forever form an integral part of it.

Then our aim will be not to conquer the world but to win it—and win it not for Christ but for God. And if that be the aim of Christians, then Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims will readily join with them. For God is the very goal at which they, too, are aiming, and we might well seek their aid and encouragement, and profit by their experience as we would have them profit by ours.

I reach one other conclusion as to the way in which the spirit of world-fellowship may be promoted. There is one form of fellowship which is common to all races of men and to men of all religions, and which mankind shares with the animal creation. It is the bond of marriage. And that form we should be wise to develop in all its sanctity, remembering once more that we human beings are yet in our infancy and in this as in other matters are only feeling our way towards a right relationship.

This kind of fellowship owes its supreme importance not only to its universal nature, as being one that we practise in common with the animals, but also to the fact that it has its roots deep down in the mating of the lowliest forms of life. It is hundreds of millions of years old. Straight up from these lowliest forms it has come to us, and to it each single one of us owes his existence. Mating is a primeval instinct. It is an impulse which springs from the very origin of life. A most beautiful example of it we have in the birds. In the ecstasy of life shown by the cock-bird both in his song and in the heightened colour and sheen of his plumage; in the delicacy of approach of cock-bird and hen-bird to each other;

in the constancy of their union ; in the care of the cock for the hen while she is at nest ; and finally in the self-sacrificing love of the mother bird for her chicks, whom she will defend at the cost of her life : in all these ways, something of the holiness of the state of matrimony may be detected even in the birds.

In the human race the mating of man and woman takes many different forms. Among Indians I have known instances where a Prince has decided on the general principle that he will be married, but has left it to others to choose a wife for him. He will not actually see her till the day of marriage, nor will she have seen him. Yet such marriages are often surprisingly successful. The number of wives an Indian may have, whether he be Hindu or Muslim, is not confined by their religions to one ; yet the percentage of Indians with more than one wife is small. In my own experience I have found Chiefs greatly to prefer having only one wife, and where they have more it is often because of the pressure put upon them. It is regarded by Hindus as almost a religious duty to get their daughters married, and a Chief who can marry and will not is looked upon as assuming airs.

In Tibet I came across the exactly opposite condition. There it was the case not of one man having several wives, but of one woman having several husbands, though even there it was only that one woman married all the brothers in a family. She did not marry a number of husbands from different families ; it was more the case of the brothers sharing one wife. And this polyandry is much more the exception than the rule.

In the main, the great trend in human life is towards monogamy. It is also towards a greater delicacy in the relationship and a more responsible freedom of choice.



May it also be towards a finer sense of its sanctity. From the first tender approaches of the one to the other, and all through their courtship up to the solemn marriage service, then on to that most sacred part of all, the final consummation of their love; from there to the agony and joy of the birth of their first-born, to the cares and pleasures of rearing a family worthy of the love that brought them into being, may every move and every moment be felt as sacred. For the more reverently this communion of man and woman is regarded and the more sacred it is made and kept, the more heavenly will be their joy and the more penetratingly will it radiate to those around them.

This sanctity of the bond between a man and a woman is already almost universally recognised. It is insisted on by all the great religions. And, except in Soviet Russia, most people like to be married by a priest or some other representative of religion in order to mark the sacred character of the union. Some instinct impels them to reverence. And how earnestly men long that all connected with this approach of a man and woman to one another and with their subsequent union should be held in special reverence and kept as something distinct and above all ordinary relationships, was shown by recent events in England. It was because such regard had not been paid that the people discountenanced one proposed marriage. And it was because another marriage had proved so admirable that the people have now such high hopes for the future. They greatly long that his family life may be a support to the King in bearing the heavy burden of kingship. And what they would like above all things is that it should prove to be an ideally happy home-life such as would furnish a standard to which thousands of others might conform. That

would give the nation sincerest satisfaction. And this is significant of what men have at heart the world over and would love to see fulfilled.

This instance is the one most prominently before us at the present moment. But it is characteristic of the deep-running feeling all men have in their hearts. All love a wedding. All pray for the happiness of bride and bridegroom. All would have their happiness last their lifetime. And all are happy in seeing them happy.

It is common experience that the woman a man loves can bring the best out of him, and that the man a woman loves can bring the best out of her. If that best could be maintained and bettered, purified of every taint and blemish, and preserved as holy for a lifetime, the influence of even one wedded pair would be of incalculable value. And multiplied a million-fold by happy unions in every country, it would turn earth into heaven.

This, then, is the most natural, the most human, and the most nearly divine of all human fellowships. Springing direct from the fountain-source of every goodness and culminating in the most exquisite of human joys, it is an actual part of the Central Motive of the universe. The sacred union of man and woman is the perfect basic fellowship for every other fellowship. It is something common to all mankind. Its aim is the same for all. And in increasingly sanctifying this relationship we shall have the whole force of things behind us. From the first tentative steps towards each other up to the final consummation, both should be made to realise that the ground whereon they tread is holy ground. Their shoes therefore must be removed that nothing may soil it or pollute it. They will not remain there always. They will have to put their shoes on again and go forth

to perform the necessary work of the world. But they will constantly return there and renew the holiness within them. And it is with the bond of holiness engendered in the home that the great World-Fellowship will be most securely bound. That is my conclusion ; and it is based upon experience gained in that home from which I fared forth into the world.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO



### FUTURE ACTIVITIES

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, IN THE LAST WORDS OF THE LAST speech of his Presidential campaign, said: "Peace on earth, good-will toward men,—democracy must cling to that message. For it is my deep conviction that democracy cannot live without that true religion which gives a nation a sense of justice and of moral purpose. Above our political forms, above our market places, stand the altars of our faith—altars on which burn the fires of devotion that maintain all that is best in us and in our nation. We have need of that devotion today."

In the same strain Lord Halifax, in a recent address to the League of Nations Union, said that they were all conscious of suspicion and misunderstanding, fear and distress still casting long dark shadows across the hearts of men and blocking the entry to that temple of peace they all wished to enter. He supposed it was ultimately because the world as a whole had not yet clearly enough called to its aid the cardinal qualities on which human life was based,—the old ones of faith, hope and charity. It was therefore plain to him that, while they were trying to make provision for the necessities of national defence, they were equally bound to hold firmly to those cardinal qualities: faith that would move mountains; hope that would not admit of failure; and the charity that sought only to find the best and, in seeking, create the best in other people. While they laboured and had to deal with the very difficult world which they found, the greatest task of all was to try to make the world better

and the kingdom of this world rather more a counterpart of the Kingdom that was above. .

Both these experienced statesmen recognised from their practical statesmanship that what a nation needed and must stand on and be inspired by was religion. And this is akin to what the Frenchman said—that any true democracy must be a theocracy ; by which, presumably, he meant that it must submit itself to be guided in all its activities by the spirit of God.

But while statesmen may tell us of their conviction that religion is a necessity in public life, and while they themselves may be imbued with the spirit of true religion in their conduct of state affairs, it is not primarily *their* business to educe that spirit in a nation. Education in the spirit of religion is primarily the business not of men of the state but of men of the spirit. It is the special duty of religious leaders, poets, and thinkers. Statesmen ought surely to be able to rely on this duty being faithfully discharged for the nation so that they may build the national activities upon the religious spirit thus inculcated, and so that they themselves may have some spot to which they can resort for refreshment of spirit in their arduous work.

Now it is to this end that the Churches and other religious bodies are strenuously working in Christian countries ; and in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam there are individuals and organisations similarly engaged. And what the Congress sought was to combine these efforts in the common task. On the morning following the close of the Congress it was, therefore, unanimously decided to continue that work permanently. A Council was elected for the purpose ; and that Council has decided to hold another Congress from July 23rd to 27th, 1937, at Balliol College, Oxford, at which the theme

to be discussed will be: "The World's Need of Religion".

Since those vast organisations, the Churches, are already preaching the need of religion, they may think the activities of the Congress are superfluous. But, in my view, the work of the Congress would be only supplementary to the work of the Churches. It would associate followers of other religions with Christians in showing the need of religion and in promoting through it the spirit of world fellowship. And if this action were to give the impression that the various religions which will be represented at the Congress were regarded as standing on a level with one another, I for my part would not greatly mind. I would assume, as a matter of course, that each member thought his own religion to be the best. I have long been accustomed to dealing with men who regarded their religion as better than my own, and I have respected them for it. We must expect each to regard his own as best. We must allow for it, gratefully appropriate from each any point on which he really is superior to ourselves, and in the meantime get on with our main business of instilling a more religious spirit into the world and through it creating a firmer unity.

In face of the irreligion in the world, all might join together to show what a precious thing religion is in human life. I have heard even Indians argue that religion has only done their country harm, by encouraging men to go apart from the world in meditation instead of working for their country's good. If India had not paid so much attention to religion in the past she would be more flourishing today. Russians are much happier today now that they have got rid of religion than they were

before the Revolution when religion had so much power. So Indians have argued, and they have also maintained that religion has often led to strife in India between Hindus and Muslims, so that if we wanted fellowship we had better do away with religion rather than encourage it. Just recently Jawaharlal Nehru has written in his biography that the spectacle of what is called religion, or at any rate organised religion, in India has filled him with horror. He had frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it. Almost always, it seemed to him, it stood for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation, and the preservation of vested interests. Such arguments are, of course, used by Europeans as well as Indians, but I quote these Indians because India is a peculiarly religious country.

Many Chinese, too, see no need of religion. An eminent Chinese of the present day, Lin Yutang, has said that for the Chinese the true end is the enjoyment of a simple life, especially the family life, and harmonious social relationships. A sane and healthy enjoyment of life is what they most desire. Their concentration on earthly happiness was as much the result as the cause of the absence of religion, argued Lin Yutang. The problem was how best to enjoy life. And for the Chinese, poetry had taken over the function of religion, in so far as religion was taken to meaning the cleansing of a man's soul, a feeling for the mystery and beauty of the universe, and a feeling of tenderness and compassion for one's fellow-men and the humble creatures of life. Poetry, in fact, was the religion of the Chinese. It taught him a pantheistic union with nature, and it called on men to look at life as a whole. For the Chinese a proposition had to be not merely logically correct: it had also to be in

accord with human nature. Theirs was a spirit of reasonableness and common sense.

This, again, is the attitude of many Europeans as well as Chinese. But I believe that the coming Congress will be able to show that, good as it is as far as it goes it does not go nearly far enough—that it is too lukewarm and half-hearted and placid. It may conduce to serenity; and men do need to be serene. But with all their composure of spirit and enjoyment of family and social life they need also the spirit to press on to a beyond of better things—to work for a better country and to join with their fellow-countrymen in working for a better world. Besides the ordinary enjoyments of social life and of art, they would reach after those supreme joys of the spirit of which the greatest religious geniuses tell.

So in considering the World's Need of Religion at the Oxford Congress special attention will be paid to showing what are the true essentials of religion. Most of those who discard and disparage religion have no notion what it really is. They are like men who despise love, never having been in love themselves. Yet often they are dimly aware of the value of religion. Nehru himself, though he opposed it, said that he knew well that there was something else than superstition and bigotry in it—"something which supplied the deep inner craving of human hearts"; for how else, he asked, could it have the tremendous power it had and bring peace and comfort to innumerable tortured souls? This dim awareness the Congress will try to enlighten. Speakers of the different religions will show from various points of view what religion really is and what its value is in the actual life of the world.

Each year similar Congresses will be held at one or other of the Universities. And between the Congresses



meetings and social gatherings will be organised, local branches established, and every opportunity afforded for members of the various denominations and various religions to come together in working for a common cause.

In all these activities full play will be allowed for diversity of belief and of presentation, as only through variety can the richest harmony be reached. If all the notes of a piano struck the same sound there would be noise but not music. It is through the variety of sounds produced that music results. So the Congress welcomes variety. It seeks to awaken a world-consciousness and develop a world-loyalty. It would have men think of something else than their own country alone or their own religion alone. It would induce them to think of the world as a whole and feel loyalty to it as well as to their own country. Through the inspiration of religion it would promote a spirit of fellowship among all mankind and so make the world one, ensure enduring peace, and incite men to aspire beyond the level plains of peace to the radiant heights of the spirit.

The kingdom of heaven upon earth is our aim, and confirmed in our faith in the ultimate goodness of things we proceed on our venture.



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